Stedden, Samuel.

A

LETTER

TO

Mr *Robert Burſcough*,

In ANSWER to his

Diſcourſe of Schiſm.

IN WHICH,

I. The Notion of Catholick Unity is Conſidered.
II. The Separation of Diſſenters not Schiſmatical Proved.
III. The Ordinations of Diſſenting Miniſters Juſtified.
IV. Pretended Pleas for Separation Examined.
V. The Caſe about Ceremonies Argued, *&c.*

Acts 24. 14.

But this I confeſs unto thee, that after the way which they call Hereſy, ſo Worſhip I the God of my Fathers; believing all Things which are written in the Law and the Prophets.

Chriſtianus mihi Nomen eſt; Catholicus vero Cognomen; illud me Nuncupat, iſtud Oſtendit. Pacian. Epiſt. ad Sympron.

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XUM

A LETTER TO Mr. *Robt. Burſcough*, IN Anſwer to his Diſcourſe of SCHISM.

Reverend Sir,

THE Diſcourſe, which under a Pretence of *Charity* to our Souls, you lately addreſſed to *Us*, *who conform'd before the Toleration, and have ſince withdrawn our ſelves from the Communion of the Church of* England; We think our ſelves oblig'd, for our own Vindication, and the better information of ſuch, as have ill Thoughts of us on that Account, to acquaint you what Entertainment it finds with moſt of us, and

for what Reaſons we can make it no better Welcome.

Introduct. Your *Introduction* addreſſes us with a Declaration of a glorious Deſign you have to do us *all the good you are able*; and thereupon think it very reaſonable to *deſire our impartial and candid peruſal of what you offer us in order to that good End*; *tho'*, as you ſay, *it be more than you can expect from thoſe amongſt us*, whom your Charity judges as *byaſs'd with Prejudice*, *falſe Zeal and worldly Intereſt*: But of all others you aſſure your ſelf of *contributing ſomething to their Satisfaction*. And that they are not like to meet with any thing from you that may give any *juſt Cauſe of Offence*; yea nothing but what proceeds from a *Spirit of Charity*. But of what ſort this your *Spirit of Charity* is, and how well it agrees in its *Vertues*, with that of the Apoſtle's, 1 *Cor.* 13. and how eminently it hath appear'd throughout your following *Diſcourſe*, every one that reads it may eaſily diſcern. This *Spirit of Charity* is doubtleſs ſome rare *Arcanum*, a highly refin'd volatile Thing; ſome fiery Tincture, which agrees not with every Conſtitution, but prepar'd with a peculiar Art, as a Cordial for one ſort of the Cholerick *Church of England Men*, with whoſe bilious Blood it agrees by Sympathy. And as for your *meek Endeavours* herein, you hope that *what uſe ſoever may be made of them by ſome Men*, *yet that God will graciouſly accept them*. Sir, What Acceptance they find with God you will better underſtand in the Day that you muſt give your Accounts to Him; but what Reaſon we have to accept them, you and others, that will,

may

may ſee by that time you are come to the other end of theſe Pages. This Oſtentation of the *Meekneſs of your Spirit*, and the *Charity of your Deſign* to reduce us to the *Truth*, and to the way of our *Duty*, is the Sum of your *Introduction*, beſides an invidious Fling at parting, which we may not paſs by without ſome Animadverſion.

You ſay, *Your Buſineſs at preſent is chiefly with Us, who think we may lawfully conform with you, and yet have deſerted your Communion; a thing indeed which is very agreeable to Fleſh and Blood, and which may make ſeveral Turns of Affairs more eaſie to Us; but wiſe and good Men would ſuſpect an Opinion and Practice, which are ſo much on the ſide of the World.*

Sir, This is the firſt *Specimen* of that ſingular *Charity* you have for us; the plainer Engliſh of which is this; That unleſs we will fully Conform to you, and for ever abandon thoſe Miniſters of Chriſt whom we now hear (tho' we have ſo much Charity for you, as not to cenſure *You*, as you cenſure *Us*) it is not fit that we ſhould be employ'd in any Office in Church or State, and in effect, that none ſhould *Buy* or *Sell* or *Live*, but ſuch as have received your *Mark*. You know what effectual Proviſion you have made for this (as far as the Times would bear) by your *Sacramental Teſt*, whereby many Perſons of good Figure and Character have been precluded from *Publick Service*; whoſe Conſciences have been too tender to ſurmount that Difficulty, and which perhaps the *Government* hath no great reaſon to be fond of. But now, to deliver our Brethren, who better underſtand their *Liberty in the Goſpel*, from this end of your Spear, where-

with you ſtrike at them ; we have this to offer.

I. We do not think it utterly unlawful, or abſolutely Sinful to Communicate occaſionally with the *Church of England*, at leaſt in a Lay-communion ; we have a more Catholick Charity, than ſo to judge of it ; tho' we know it to be a very *Faulty*, yet we take it to be a *True Church of Chriſt* ; and are ready to teſtify (as need requires) our general Communion with it, as a part with us of the ſame univerſal Body, tho' we enter not into a ſtated Communion with it, under thoſe unjuſtifyable Terms, on which it is offer'd us.

II. It is every Man's bounden *Duty* to ſerve God and his Country, as alſo to provide for Himſelf and his own Family, with all thoſe intellectual and corporal Abilities, wherewith God hath bleſt him, according as there are Occaſions and Calls to it ; therefore nothing that is tolerable, and not plainly ſinful, tho' burdenſom and uneligible, ought to reſtrain us from the Service of God or Man, which we are fitted for, and called to. For who knows of what conſequence the Service of ſuch may be, eſpecially in a publick Poſt, to the preſervation of Religion and Property, or to the ſupport and eſtabliſhment of the Government ? Which are Conſiderations ſufficient to preponderate all tolerable Inconveniencies.

III. That it may appear we are not acted herein, merely by the Principles of *Humane Policy*, or *Self-Ends* ; we have the Example of the great *Apoſtle of the Gentiles* to warrant our Practice. You may ſee what his Opinion was of the *Jew-*

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iſh Rites and Ceremonies, and how zealouſly he had, in ſeveral of his Epiſtles, declar'd againſt them, as *weak and beggarly Elements*, and *enſlaving* Things, *Gal.* 4. 9. *Antichriſtian*, Ch. 5. 2. *Inconſiſtent with the Liberty of the Goſpel*, ver. 1. *Another Goſpel, than that which he had Preached unto 'em*, Ch. 1. 6, 7, 8. And pronounces *Anathema* on them that had troubled 'em with it, *ver.* 9. Beſides what he writes in ſome other Epiſtles to the ſame purpoſe. This is more than ever we heard from any Nonconformiſt againſt the Ceremonies of the Church of *England*; and yet for all this, the Wiſe and Holy *Paul*, to avoid the offending his weak Brethren, would not ſcruple, for once, to Circumciſe *Timothy*, Act. 16. 3. At another time, to *ſhave his Head*, and obſerve the *Jewiſh Rites of a Religious Vow*, Ch. 18. 18. And at another time, to ſave himſelf from the Rage of a Company of Bigots at *Jeruſalem*, appear'd there as a *Nazarite*, with all the Formalities the Law required in that Caſe, *Ch.* 21. 24. This he could do occaſionally, according to the *Liberty* he had in Chriſt, which he was careful to preſerve, and not to be brought under the Power of theſe Things, which is contrary to the Nature and free State of the Goſpel. And having this apoſtolical Precedent, our Conſciences are at eaſe in this Matter. Yet,

IV. If there be any that have made theſe external Compliances, *renuente Conſcientia*, or but with a doubting Conſcience; let them look to it, and repent of their Sin, for *whatſoever is not of Faith, is Sin.* But to paſs this Cenſure on any, without clear Evidence, is far from that *Charity*, *which thinketh no Evil.*

Sect. 1. Your first *Section* is but Preliminary to what you pretend to be more Argumentative; wherein you tell us, that the Church of Christ, being but *One*, and that, *in the highest and strictest manner of Union that is possible for a Society of Men; all the Question will be, wherein this Union does consist, or in what things it ought to be maintain'd? To this you answer, That all Christians ought to be united, 1. in Faith, 2. in Love, 3. in outward Worship and Communion.* On the Two former you *touch lightly*, because you perceive, that the stress of the Question lies on the Third. So that tho' We Dissenters be *One* with you in *Faith* and *Love*, which (whatever you think) we have alwaies taken to be the main fundamental Principles of our Christianity, and the strongest Nerves of our Christian Union, and all that is (as absolutely necessary) requir'd of us, 2 *Tim.* 1. 13. *Gal.* 5. 6. *Philem. ver.* 5. Yet we must, by the Rules of your *Charity*, be all Damn'd, if we dare to dissent from you, in any of your outward Acts and Modes of Worship and Communion. Here you run on a large and learned Harangue on the excellency and necessity of Church-Concord in the external Forms of Worship and Discipline; as if a few variable, unscriptural, and confessedly indifferent Ceremonies, were the only true Cement and Badge of Christian Union; and *without which, 'tis impossible (as a visible Society) to appear in the Eye of the World, as One.* And for this you think you very pertinently quote both Scriptures and the Fathers. Now as to what you say as to the necessity of Union in Essentials, we are ready to say with you; and take Communion

on in Externalls and Circumſtantialls (where it may be had without Sin) to be, on ſeveral Accounts, as deſirable as you can repreſent it to be. But when you ſay *that Faith and Love, being inviſible Principles, are not capable of being a publick Badge of the Chriſtian Profeſſion*; And Argue from thence, *that 'tis only Uniformity in the external Rites and Ceremonies of Worſhip, that evidences the Oneneſs of Faith and Affection*; as if *Faith* and *Love* had no other way to expreſs their Efficacy and Sincerity, but this; you do not only traduce thoſe Divine Principles, but ſhamefully expoſe the Church, of which you are ſo very tender. For ſhould it be ſaid, that no one would ever believe the Members of the *Church of England*, to be any of *Chriſt's Diſciples*, did they not ſee them ſo Zealous for the *Ceremonies* of their Church, how little would this be for the Credit of their Chriſtianity? And indeed this is lamentably too true of very many, not only of the common Members, but of the Teachers and Leaders of the Church, that have little elſe to diſtinguiſh them from Heathens, or to perſwade a belief of their Chriſtianity, but an empty Name, and a blind Zeal for what they call the *Church*.

That the Church Univerſal is One, and, in ſome reſpects may be ſaid to be one viſible Society, and Political Body, we readily grant, ſo that the Unity be made to conſiſt only in what is *Eſſential* to it; elſe we muſt inevitably cut the Catholick Church in Pieces, according to the variety and differences of the external Rites and Communions of the many particular Churches, of which the whole is conſtituted. And when

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we have done ſo, where ſhall we find that *Oracle* that ſhall infallibly determine and aſſure us, which of all theſe Parts, is that which we ought to own, and to Communicate with, as the Church of Chriſt, in which alone Salvation is to be had? Muſt you be the Oracle? May not others claim it as well as you? Or will you ſend us to *Rome* to be determin'd? Yet this is that you ſo charitably direct us to, and are ſo ſtrenuouſly contending for. If then the *Rending of the Church be Schiſm*, let all the unprejudiced part of the World judge, who are the *Schiſmaticks*, *You*, or *We*. We are ready to Communicate with you in all that is *Eſſential* to the Church of Chriſt, and profeſs our ſelves to be ſo far *One* with you; but becauſe we diſſent from you in ſome Circumſtantials of your own deviſing, which God hath no where requir'd of us, and which are juſtly Offenſive to the Conſciences of very many of the Faithful; *yet*, which *you* make the indiſpenſable *Conditions* of Communion with you; therefore we muſt be cut off and caſt out, as no parts of the Catholick Church of Chriſt. Is not this to cut the Church in Pieces? and the τὸ κεφαλαιῶδες of a Schiſmatical Church?

The Catholick Church of Chriſt indeed is *One*; therefore he that is duly admitted, as a Member, in any one true part, or particular Congregation of this Church, has a right of Communicating in all; and he that is juſtly Excommunicated out of one, is cut off from all; becauſe all are but the integrating Parts of one and the ſame Body. But then they can be one, only in thoſe things, which are eſſentially common to all, and not in thoſe peculiar Forms, or accidental

tal Differences, which are, one way or other, become proper to 'em, as particular Parts. Will you cut off the Foot, as no part of the Body, becauſe it differs in Form from the Hand? Are you offended with your Noſe, becauſe it is not, in Figure, like your Ear? When you have diſmember'd all the Diſſimilar Parts, what a comely, uſeful, uniform Trunk will you have left? Yet this is what you are Pleading for; Where then is your *Charity?* Or your *Policy?* You ſay, *You ſee not what juſt Cauſe there can be, that they ſhould be divided in Worſhip, who are united in Faith*; And we ſay ſo too. But why then have you thus divided us from you? Whoſe Fault is it that we do not Worſhip God together, but yours, that will not ſuffer it, but on ſuch Terms as we cannot without Sin ſubmit to; and which you have deviſ'd and impoſ'd, with a deſign to keep ſo many of us out of your Communion?

That the Church is a *Regular Society*, we grant. *A Body fitly joyn'd together, conſiſting of many Members, of which all have not the ſame Office*, as you quote it from the Apoſtle. Neither have all the ſame *External Form*, or *manner of Operation* in the Service of the Body. Order is to be preſerv'd in the Church; but how ſhall we agree what, and whoſe Order it ſhall be? Let us ask you ſoberly; Is there no true Church in the World but yours? If there be, may not every one of theſe Churches, which differ from you, and from one another, as much as we, magnify their own Order as a Law to all the Reſt, as you now do? And then tell us, whether it be Order or Confuſion that theſe Poſitions lead to; or whether this be not the

way

way to ſet all the Chriſtian World by the Ears.

Here you complain that *Men are generally averſe from enduring any thing of Subjection*; to which we may add, and altogether as prone to Domineering and Impoſing. Now *the Obedience, which is preſcrib'd in the Texts of Scripture, which you have cited*, you ſay, *is to be paid by the Faithful to thoſe that are over them in the Lord:* But by the whole tenour of your Diſcourſe, you plainly inſinuate, that the Wiſdom (which is in effect the ſame with the Will) of thoſe that have obtain'd the Government of the Church, muſt be the Rule to all their Inferiours. And by their being over them in the Lord, you give us to underſtand nothing elſe but their Power *de facto* in the Church, where they ſit in *Moſes's Chair*, as the Repreſentatives of Chriſt in Government; ſo that they muſt be obey'd, without asking any Queſtion for Conſcience ſake. But for our parts, we underſtand not how we can be ſecur'd againſt the danger of Church-Tyranny and Superſtition; if thoſe Words of the Apoſtle, 1 *Theſ.* 5. 12. ἐν κυρίῳ *in the Lord*, do not import the Bounds of our Obedience, as well as the general Matter of it, and Motive to it. Church-Rulers may be forward to Labour, and to Admoniſh too, but if it be not in the Lord, and according to the Lord, woe be to them that are guided and influenc'd by 'em. But let the Apoſtle's Exhortation be taken in the true intent and meaning of it, and we will be as forward to obey as you. There's nothing in the World that we covet more, than to ſee ſuch Biſhops and Paſtors in the *Church of England*, as the Apoſtle exhorts

horts us to obey in the Lord, that is (without any perſonal Reflection) ſuch as require nothing of us, but what the Lord requires, that the World might ſee, how much we would diſdain to be out-done by any, but Flatterers and Sycophants, in our Love and Obedience to 'em.

What you ſay of the Oneneſs of Church-Government, and of the People that are under it, we agree to, if you will but ſtand to your own Diſtinctions; *That what you ſay of both is to be underſtood of them, ſo far as they agree to Chriſt's Inſtitution. And if Chriſt be not divided, neither are they. They are not divided, I mean, ſo far as they act according to his Will, and the Rules of their Order.* If by theſe *Rules*, you mean the *Sacred Rules*, which Chriſt hath given them, and not the *Arbritary Rules* which they give us, We mean ſo too. *That the faithful People under their lawful Paſtors* (we hope you mean *Lawful*, by the *Law* of Chriſt, and not only by the *Law* of Man) *make up one Body*: *This*, you ſay, *is evident, from their Duty*; and *from their Rights.*

From their Duty, you plead, (1.) *They are oblig'd to Honour and Obey their Spiritual Rulers.* Ay, Sir, In the Lord, and according to the Lord. (2.) *It is their Duty to joyn together in publick Acts of Worſhip, with that Company of Chriſtians, which they find Eſtabliſhed* (and in ſome Caſes, tho' only *tollerated*, yea, tho' *Perſecuted*) *under a* lawful Paſtor, *where they reſide.* This we acknowledge is their Duty, where they may do it without Sin.

From their *Rights*, *which are the ſame every where*; you Argue, *That this Union is founded on a Divine Inſtitution, and the Baptiſmal Covenant, in which they are all alike engag'd, and not on a formal*

mal poſitive League amongſt themſelves. No, Sir, nor on any thing that is merely *Humane*, or of an *Indifferent*, much leſs a *doubtful Nature*, wherein the Subſtance or Eſſentials of Chriſtianity do not conſiſt.

What you object againſt the *Independent* Congregational way, or any others of the ſame Practice and Perſuaſion in this Point, we take not our ſelves to be concern'd in, unleſs you miſtake us all for ſuch who have not that Dependance on, and Communion with you, which you are Quarrelling with us for.

Having been at great Labour to prove, what none of Us, nor perhaps any one elſe, that is call'd Chriſtian, ever deny'd, *viz.* That the *univerſal* Church is *One* Body; you make your Application of this profound Doctrin, by way of Encouragement to your ſelves, and draw a *moſt delightful Contemplation from it, That it is now the ſame Body that it was from the beginning.* The *ſame* indeed is every true Church of Chriſt, as it was from the beginning, that is, in all things that are abſolutely neceſſary to Salvation; but we would gladly underſtand where that pure Church is now to be found, which hath not at all deviated, or degenerated from what the Church of Chriſt was in the beginning. 'Tis true, every true Church of Chriſt now in the World is deriv'd, by Succeſſion, from Chriſt and his Apoſtles; but dares the *Church of England ſay*, that it is now the very *ſame* in all it's Circumſtantials and external Modes and Forms of Worſhip, Diſcipline and Ceremonies with thoſe of the Apoſtles own Planting? Where do you read your apoſtolical Rules, or Precedents for any of thoſe Things, which

which you ſo zealouſly Practiſe, and ſo arbitrarily impoſe on us, as the Terms of our Communion with you, and which are the only Matters in debate between us? Yet you would have the World believe, that without our full Conformity to theſe Things, and our Communion with you in 'em, we cannot be *one Body* with the *Univerſal Church*, nor in Communion with the *Apoſtles*. Nor is this all; but that conſequently we are out of Communion with the Father and the Son, and ſo are in a ſtate of Infidelity and Damnation. Have we not herein a ſpecial Inſtance and Evidence of your *Catholick Charity*, juſt like theirs of the Church of *Rome*, who call thoſe only Chriſtians, that are of their own Communion? Let us be ever ſo Orthodox in all the Articles of the Chriſtian Faith; ever ſo right as to the Object of our Religious Worſhip, or Reverent and Devout in the Acts of it; ever ſo Sober, Juſt and Righteous in our Converſation; or ever ſo willing to walk in Communion with you, as far as we may do it without Sinning againſt God and our own Souls: Yet for want of Conformity to you, in all thoſe unneceſſary Things which you would impoſe on us, we muſt be cut off from Chriſt, and left to Periſh with the Heathen World. But if we will tamely put our Necks under your Yoke, and proſtitute our Conſciences to your Authority, and adventure our All to Eternity on the ſafe Conduct of your Direction and Benediction, let us be ever ſo ignorant of the Articles or Nature of the Faith we profeſs, or ever ſo Scandalous in our Lives, yet if we Live and Die in your Communion, you will on our Death-Beds bring us the Sacrament of the Body and

Blood

Blood of our Saviour, which you will pretend to Conſecrate to us, and ſo Abſolve us, and tell us we are ſafe for the other World. May we not tell a Popiſh Prieſt now, *Mutato nomine, de te Fabula Narratur?*

And now Sir, having taken this brief View of your firſt *Section*, wherein had we followed you Line by Line, in every thing that might have offer'd us a juſt Remark, it would have carried us too far beyond the due Bounds of a Letter. Wherefore, for brevity ſake, we will now ſumm up the Argument of it in this categorical Form.

The Univerſal Church of Chriſt is *One Body*,
But the *Church of England*, and thoſe of the *Diſſenters* are *Two*, Erg.
Diſſenters are not of the Church of Chriſt.
Or which may be concluded altogether as Logically, *Erg.* Either the *Church of England*, or the *Diſſenters* are not the Church of Chriſt.

Both of theſe are alike true. In what Univerſity learn'd you this Logick? Or by what Pretence can you hope to hide the ſhame of ſo ſtaring a Fallacy?

Sect. 2. That we have not wrong'd you in the Syllogiſm, we have drawn upon your firſt *Section*, appears by your own Inferences in your Second; where you conclude, *That a Breach of Union in any of theſe Things*, viz. Not only in *Faith* and *Love*, but in *External Communion*, and particularly, with the *Church of England*, in its preſent State, and in all its Rites and Ceremonies, which is the main thing in diſpute betwixt us, *where-*

ever

ever the Fault is, (as you expreſs it with very good caution) muſt needs be Sinful, *i. e.* ſo Sinful, as (according to your Hypotheſis) cuts a Perſon off from all ſaving Communion with the Church of Chriſt.

Now this Inference, ſo generally, yet cautiouſly ſtated, you begin very Orthodoxly to defend in your next Paragraphs, where you ſay,

1. *That if there be but one Faith deliver'd to the Saints, for which they muſt earneſtly contend, they grievouſly offend who add new Articles to it, or take away from it ſuch as are already reveal'd, or otherwiſe deprave it by a mixture of Falſhood. And ſo far as they do ſo, we ought to depart from them, and not betray or deny the Truth in complyance with them.* Sir, We ſincerely thank you for this, and wiſh that we may always find you fixt on this good Principle. This is all that *We* and our *Teachers* have been ſo long wreſtling and waiting on the *Church of England* for. Grant us but this, and then there will need but one thing more (beſides the Grace of God,) to reconcile and unite us. If we unite with you in all that the Word of God requires us to unite in, the Fault will not be *Ours*, if we depart and ſeparate from you in thoſe Articles, which are not of the *Faith that was once delivered to the Saints*, or in thoſe Acts of *Worſhip and outward Communion*, which we have no Warrant in the Scriptures for, but general Cautions againſt; then our Separation will not (by this Principle of Yours) be damn'd by you as Schiſmatical, but muſt be acknowledged (as we verily believe it) to be a part of our bounden Duty. And when you

ſpeak with ſo much keenneſs againſt our Diviſion and Separation from you, do Us and the Cauſe but ſo much right, as to prefix the Word *Cauſeleſs*, and you will find us ready to ſay (as to the Theory of your Doctrin) much the ſame as you do. All that you quote out of the Scriptures, or out of your Saints, or any other more modern Authors of your own, or of our Perſuaſion, againſt *Schiſm*, is nothing at all to us, unleſs you firſt prove our Separation to be *Cauſeleſs*, and conſequently *Schiſmatical*.

Now in order to this, you undertake,

1. *To ſhew us what the Nature of Schiſm is.*

2. *What Grounds you have to apprehend that we are deeply concern'd in it.*

3. *You examine the Arguments that have been offer'd on our part, to excuſe us from the guilt of it.*

4. *You repreſent to us the ſad Conſequence of it.*

According to this Method we ſhall now endeavour to follow you.

I. You ſay, *That Schiſm, in the Notion of it that we are now upon, is a cauſeleſs Breach of outward Eccleſiaſtical Communion.* By this Limitation of your Definition, whereby you warily explain your ſelf, you give us to underſtand, that what your *Diſcourſe* is ſo hotly affected with, is not the *Whole*, but only a *Branch* of *Schiſm*, and indeed one of the leaſt and remoteſt Branches of

of it; yet which, if *Cauſeleſs*, we will grant it to your Definition, to be *Schiſmatical*. And we again thank your Ingenuity in inſerting the Word *Cauſeleſs*, by which *Specifick Difference* of your *Genius*, you leave us to conclude, that there is a Breach of outward Eccleſiaſtical Communion, which is not *Cauſeleſs*, but *Neceſſary*; and if we can prove this to be our Caſe, then are you bound, by your own Definition, to Abſolve us of that Guilt, with which we ſtand charg'd by you.

This Schiſm, you ſay, *is ſometimes within a Church, ſometimes from a Church, ſometimes ſets up oppoſite Churches and Officers.* All which, if the Separation be *Cauſeleſs*, muſt needs carry the *Schiſm* to higher degrees of Guilt; And much more, when it conſtitutes *Paſtors* without any lawful *Authority*, or *Ordination*. So that in all this we are like to agree in Notion, till it comes to be try'd, whether the Separation, with which we are charg'd, be *Cauſeleſs* or no; and whether our *Paſtors* be conſtituted without any lawful *Authority* or *Ordination*.

But before we come to the Examination of this part of the Queſtion, wherein the main ſtreſs of all lies, we are diverted by what you ſay, *you need not enter upon*, viz. *The Debate, Whether Epiſcopal Ordination, and Baptiſm conferr'd in Schiſm be valid?* And yet you ſo far enter upon it (whether you had need to do it or no) as to reſolve it in the Negative. Now we hope that you would have us to underſtand *Schiſm* here, in the ſame Notion of it, as you give it us in your Definition, *viz. A cauſeleſs Breach of outward Eccleſiaſtical Communion*, tho' in all other

reſpects, wherein the Eſſentials of the Chriſtian Faith and Profeſſion do conſiſt, there be no *Schiſm*, but a good Agreement both with the Holy Scriptures, and with the Catholick Church; and that all Ordinances adminiſter'd by ſuch as are under the guilt of this piece of *Schiſm*, are null, you conclude from the Notion you have conceiv'd of *Catholick Unity*; which new-found Notion of yours you ſtrongly fancy is *grounded on the Scriptures* you have before quoted (*i. e.* as you underſtand and apply them to the Service of your *Hypotheſis*) and *on the Judgment and Practice of the Faithful in the pureſt Ages* (*alias* the moſt *Popiſh* Ages;) ſo that you preſume your Inference is clear; That all thoſe who have ſeparated without juſt Cauſe from the *outward Communion* of that Church, with which they ought, (or with which you will ſay they ought) to hold Communion, and ſo perſiſting in that Separation, tho' otherwiſe never ſo Orthodox, or Holy, have hereby ſo cut themſelves off from the Body of the *Univerſal Church*, that they can do nothing, that can qualify themſelves or others for Communion with it. So that by this your Rule of *Catholick Unity* in *outward Communion*, all thoſe Perſons and Churches, that herein agree not with *you*, are not of the *Body*, nor united to the *Head*, and then muſt neceſſarily be in a ſtate of Damnation. Woe be then to all thoſe poor Churches that are to your Conſtitution, and way of Government and Worſhip Strangers. But, by the way, give us leave to ask you, How it comes to paſs, that *Baptiſm* and *Ordination* received in the Church of *Rome*, are accounted valid in your Church of *England*, and yet *Ordination* in any

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Proteſtant Church, that's not of your Conſtitution, accounted Null? Or, for what politick Reaſon is their *Baptiſm* allowed, and their *Ordination* only Condemn'd? Is it becauſe the Church of *Rome* never ſeparated from *you*, nor *you* from *it*, as all the other *Proteſtant Churches* have done? Who muſt therefore be all abandon'd by you, as *Harlots* that deſerve to be ſton'd, while *Rome* is own'd for your *Siſter*, or your *Mother*, and of the ſame *Catholick Body* with *you?* Either own the Relation, or renounce the Title of *Proteſtant*.

Will you ſay that theſe Churches were never in Communion with you, and therefore did not go out from you? Suppoſe this were true of the main Body of them, that they were never in particular *outward Communion* with the *Church of England*, tho' before the Reformation they were in the ſame Church with you; and many of thoſe, and of their Children, who were once actually in particular Communion with you, went out from you, on the ſame Account as we do; yet, ſuppoſing it otherwiſe, How little will this help *Them* more than *Us*, as to the Oneneſs of the outward Communion of the univerſal Church, in the Senſe that you take it, and urge it on *Us?*

And now that we are upon Enquiries with you; Pray be not offended if we ask you once more. What think you of our firſt *Proteſtant Reformers?* Before they actually ſeparated from the Church of *Rome*, were they not Members of that Church, and in *outward Communion* with it If not, how could they be ſaid to ſeparate from it? But if they were; let us ask you again; was that Church of which they were then Members,

a true Church of Chriſt, or not? If not, then that Church, and all the Members of it, was not united to the *Head*, and conſequently was no Church, nor, by your Rule of *Catholick Unity*, could do any thing to qualify themſelves, or others for Communion with any part of the *Catholick Church*; and from whom then did your *Church of England*, or any of the *Reformed*, derive their Succeſſion and Authority, from the *Apoſtles?* But if it was a true Church, how could they, according to your Notion of *Catholick Unity*, ſeparate from it, without involving themſelves in the guilt of *Schiſm*, with which you now charge us? May we not hence conclude, that to ſeparate from a true Church of Chriſt, that retains the Eſſentials of a Church, is not always *Schiſmatical*, nor a Solution of *Catholick Unity*. Will you tell us, that theſe had a Warrant, by a *Call* from Heaven, to juſtify their Separation? *Rev.* 18. 4. 2 *Cor.* 6. 17. But on what Reaſon was this *Call* grounded? *Come out of her my People, that ye be not Partakers of her Sins.* And doth not the ſame *Call* reach *Us*, as far as the *Reaſon* is the ſame? Tho' the Sins of the Church of *Rome* were greater than thoſe of the preſent *Church of England*, yet what is Sin, is Sin ſtill, and will, by your own Conceſſions, ſo far juſtify our Separation; and on no other Account do we deſire or pretend to juſtify it.

The *Separatiſts* condemn'd in Scripture; and with whom you would ſort *Us*, and ſo repreſent us to the World, were Men of *very ill Character*, as to their Morals; Perſons given up to Senſuality, *walking after their own ungodly Luſts*; tho'

tho' veild under a Form of Religion, yet by their corrupt Lives, they were visibly to be discern'd. Now let the impartial part of the World judge whether this be so much our Character, as the Character of those, by whom we are thus Censur'd.

That the Fathers and Bishops of the first Ages were very jealous of the Union of their Churches, and an intire Obedience to their Ecclesiastical Rulers; very Passionately, and sometimes Hyperbolically declaiming against *Separation*, or setting up Pastors without the Approbation of their own Bishops, is not to be denyed; and for which they had some prudential Reasons. The Christian Church was then in its Infancy, and therefore requir'd a stricter Hand of Government over it, for the preservation of its Unity in Communion; the Faithful were not so well settl'd, and experienced in their *Way*; their Dangers were many ways extraordinary, not only from the *Heathen* Persecutors, but from the *Jewish* Bigots, which were in so many Places dispers'd among them, and had so troublesome and ensnaring an Influence on the young *Gentile* Converts. Besides the many false and seditious Teachers, which the Devil had Sown, as his Tares, almost every where among them; the Orthodox Presbyters too few, and generally too weak to deal with so many, so potent, and so subtil Enemies, or to be entrusted with the Conduct of the Church, without the Counsel and Direction of its prime Guides and Governours: Besides, the Honour and Satisfaction of Sovereign Rule and Dictatorship is what was ever very pleasing to

Nature. So that all these things consider'd, we have no reason to wonder at the *Heat* of their Spirits in this Case. And indeed the Church had then very great Reason to bless God for this their Zeal, and most religiously to observe them in it, especially while they had no cause to dissent, or divide themselves on the account of any *Heresies* they Taught them, or any disputable unscriptural *Impositions*, that were required as the *Conditions* of their Communion with them. There were no such Things exacted of *Them*, as have been of *Us* and our *Teachers*, which made their Obedience easy and indisputable. And you may observe that the great Reason of their Care to preserve the Unity of the Churches *outward Communion*, was not to uphold a few unnecessary Ceremonies, but to preserve the Purity of its spiritual Worship and Doctrin, which was infinitely more valuable and consequential ; a circumstantial variety of the external Forms of Church-Administrations would have done the Church no more harm, than the variety which we see in every *Species* of the Creation doth do them, as long as that wherein the vital Substance of Religion consists is preserv'd.

You having prov'd that a *causeless* Separation from the Church is highly *Schismatical*, wherein we do not oppose you in the *Theorie*, but in the *Application* of your Doctrin, in which you all along beg the Question ; you tell us, *That for Separatists to set up opposite Churches and Officers, is a degree of Sin much worse than Separation it self.* And we will say as you do, when once you have prov'd the Separation to be *Causeless*. But till then, we hope your Christian *Charity* will allow us

us to provide for our own Souls, that we may not be as Sheep without a Shepherd, when we are either unjuſtly caſt out by you, or moſt juſtly ſeparated from you. And if you will not allow us this, we will bleſs God, and thank our more merciful Governours that do allow us, without your Leave, ſo to do.

Laſtly, You proceed to a yet higher Degree of Schiſm, *viz. When they that are engag'd in it, conſtitute Officers without Authority; or take to themſelves Paſtors that have no lawful Miſſion or real Ordination.* This is another of your orthodox *Hypotheſes*, which it is a thouſand Pities, that it ſhould be diſhonour'd by a Miſs-application. Sir, *We* are as little for Uncommiſſionated Preachers and Self-intruders into the miniſterial Office, as *You*. Tho' bare Miſſion, without Miniſterial Qualification, make but an *Idol-Shepherd*, and wherein the *Church of England* is more deeply concern'd, than perhaps you are willing to own, yet Qualification without a rightly deriv'd Comiſſion, makes but a *Thief* or a *Robber*. So that herein *You* and *We* agree in *Theſi*. But when on this Head you apply to Us, and to our Miniſters that tragical Story of *Korah* and his Complices, we cannot take it ſo kindly of you; tho' you are not the firſt Man, that in great Wrath, hath thrown this heavy Stone at our Heads; however, we have not been hitherto hurt by it. The Hiſtory of the Caſe we need not repeat; the Principles by which they were acted, notwithſtanding their popular Pretenſions, were Seditious, and ſacrilegiouſly Rebellious; and the Judgment of God on them and their Followers, as Juſt as it was Dreadful. But before your

your Charity had apply'd this dismal Story and Guilt to Us and to our Teachers, you ought to have drawn a true Parallel of the Case, and have prov'd that our Ministers have no more Call nor Right to the Gospel-Ministry, than *Korah* and his Company had to the Priesthood; and that God hath set as strict Bounds about your *English Episcopacy*, as it is now Established, exclusively of all others, as he then had done about *Moses*, and the *Aaronical Priesthood*. And till this be done, there is no Man of sober Thought, but must suspend his Judgment on us.

Out of this Preamble, you lead us to your third *Section*, where you tell us, *You are now come to our Case*; for indeed we think you have hitherto been far enough from it; here then we hope for a fair Trial, may we but be determin'd by what is written in that Book, out of which both *You* and *We* must shortly be judged.

And in Order to our Conviction, you are pleas'd to mind us how nearly it concerns us to enquire

I. *Whether we have not contracted the guilt of Schism in our Separation from the Church of* England.

II. *Whether we have not increased this Guilt by setting up opposite Churches and Officers, or joyning with them.*

III. *Whether our Pastors have any just Title to the Ministry.*

Sir,

Sir, Had we not, to the beſt of our Power and Skill, with the greateſt Diligence and Sincerity, enquir'd into all theſe Things long before this Day, we had acted very precipitantly and dangerouſly; but yet ſuch an Admonition as this, however deſign'd, ſhall never be out of Seaſon with us. But ſeeing you offer your Interrogatories not in the form of an *Enquiry*, but of an *Indictment*, we are ready to anſwer to each *Article*, in our juſt Defence.

1. The firſt *Article* of our *Indictment* runs thus, *That we have contracted the Guilt of Schiſm, by our Separation from the Church of England*; that is (to wave all Diſputes about the Ambiguity of the Word) what you are pleas'd to call *the Church of England*. Tho' we have varied your Form of Speech, we have done you no wrong, it being a known Rule in Rhetorick, that a Negative, Interrogation is but a more vehement Affirmation. And to convict us of the *Schiſm* you charge us with, you plead thus. *Was your Communion with it lately Lawful, and have any new Terms been added, to make it ceaſe to be ſo? Or was Conformity then a Duty, and is it now become a Sin?* This you take to be a *Dead Blow*, which muſt needs convince us, and make us cry Guilty, or ſtop our Mouths for ever. But be not too Confident before you have heard our *Defence*.

1. By way of *Conceſſion*, you ſhall have all that you here ſuppoſe, that you may ſee we are not froward.

1. That we once thought our Communion with your *Church of England Lawful*, we grant; for had we not been ſo perſwaded, we had been ſelf-

ſelf-condemn'd by our own Practice. Yet whatever our private Thoughts were once of it, that was not it that could make the thing to be in it ſelf either Lawful or Unlawful, our private Judgment being only a Rule to our ſelves. And if we were therein miſtaken, thro' our Weakneſs, or any Prejudices of our Education, we hope you will allow us the Liberty of rectifying our Judgments upon better Information, of which, if you think us uncapable, what do all your Arguings with us ſignify? But,

2. We will grant you yet a little more; that we are ſtill of the ſame Opinion, that it is Lawful to Communicate with the *Church of England*, i. e. that it is not abſolutely, and in it ſelf Sinful ſo to do; But then we hope, that if your *Charity* will not, your *Logick* muſt grant us, that what is to be conſider'd but as ſimply *Lawful*, is Matter of *Liberty*, and not of *Neceſſity*. We ſay *Liberty*, granted us by the Nature of the Thing, without any Relation to what the Government hath pleas'd (ſo much to your regret) to grant us. But where we are thus at *Liberty*, to Cenſure us for uſing it, is Inhumanity.

3. If this be not yet enough to pleaſe you, we will grant a little more; we once thought the Conformity you contend for, *i. e.* our Lay-Conformity to be our *Duty*; nor have we repented of theſe our Thoughts to this Day, nor acted any thing that is inconſiſtent with them. We hope the Ingenuity of your cultivated Reaſon will allow, at leaſt in *Theſi*, that what is a *Duty* at one Time, and under ſome Circumſtances, is not always ſo at another Time, and under other Circumſtances.

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This you muſt grant, or you know with what a Crowd of ſenſeleſs Abſurdities you will be peſter'd, and of which you will not be able to rid your ſelf. Now having granted you all this, we will ſee what we have left for our ſelves, and Anſwer you,

2. By way of *Confutation* of your *Suppoſition*; you ſuppoſe.

1. That becauſe our Conformity was once *Lawful*, therefore it is not only ſo ſtill, eſpecially becauſe there have been no new Terms added by you to alter the Caſe, but that therefore it is ſtill *Neceſſary*, which is Illogical enough. But to this we ſay as the Apoſtle doth in a like Caſe, 1 *Cor.* 6. 12. *Ch.* 10. 23. *All things are Lawful unto me, but all things are not Expedient*, i. e. All things that are Lawful to me, as all indifferent Things, in their own Nature are, are not always Expedient; and when they come to be Inexpedient, they ceaſe to be, in their uſe, Lawful; for *Quicquid non expedit, in quantum non expedit, non licet. All Things are Lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the Power of any*, q. d. In the uſe of all *Lawful* Things I have my *Liberty*, to do, or to forbear, as it conſiſts with the Expediency of my own, or others Edification; and this *Liberty* I will not betray, by being brought under the *Power* of *any*; of *any* what? Why, if it be Senſe, it muſt be of *any* of thoſe *Lawful Things* he is now ſpeaking of; for if he be, by any weak Scruples, or ill Principles of his own, or any impoſing Humour of others, brought under the *Power* of 'em, or to look upon them as *Neceſſary*, he ſuperſtitiouſly enſlaves his Conſcience, and renders himſelf

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uncapable of ſerving the more noble and uſeful Ends of his *Liberty*. Now in Conformity to this apoſtolical Rule, we lately conformed to the *Church of England*, becauſe we thought it in it ſelf, *Lawful*, and on ſome accounts, then *Expedient*, ſo to do; but under our preſent Circumſtances, and ſince that Providence hath given us the Experience of other Publick and Peaceable Chriſtian Communions, we find it *Inexpedient* to continue where we were, with relation to the eternal ſafety of our own Souls, which is the higheſt Concern we have under Heaven; tho' this be one of thoſe Things which in your next *Section* you upbraid us with. So that tho' it lately was, and ſtill is ſimply *Lawful* to communicate with you, yet we now find it to be on ſome of the moſt important Accounts, very *Inexpedient* and *Prejudicial*, both to our ſelves and others; and the uſe of our Chriſtian *Liberty* herein no way really injurious to the Edification, or to the Peace of the Church; beſides thoſe private Diſorders it accidentally occaſions in the uncharitable Spleens of a few.

2. You ſuppoſe that what was once our *Duty* cannot now become a *Sin* to us to do. But we wonder that this ſhould be ſuch a Paradox to a Perſon of your Capacity; muſt you not allow it in Thouſands of other Caſes, that what is a *Duty* at one time, would be very inexpediently, and ſometimes ſcandalouſly *ſinful* at another? Why then ſhould it look like ſuch a Contradiction in our Caſe? 'Twas indeed our *Duty* to provide for our own, and for the Souls of our Families, in the beſt manner we could while we were in Communion with you, that is, while we either

either knew no better, or could get no better; we thought it our *Duty*, as we do ſtill, rather to joyn with *You*, than to ly at Home on Lord's Days, or do worſe. But now that God hath enlarged our Steps, and made a more plentiful Proviſion for us, we ſhould Sin againſt our own Souls, and theirs too that are committed to our Charge, if we ſhould not make uſe of what God hath given us in this kind, and not hazzard the loſs of our *eternal All* for the ſake of a few unneceſſary, offenſive Ceremonies and humane Inſtitutions, wherein you would Popiſhly perſwade us to believe that the vital Union of the Catholick Church doth conſiſt. And thus we briefly anſwer to the firſt *Article* of our *Indictment*.

II. The ſecond *Article* againſt us is, *That we have added to our Sin, by ſetting up oppoſite Churches and Officers, or joyning with them; And this hath more alienated our Minds from thoſe whom*, you ſay, *we have unjuſtly forſaken. This you ſuppoſe is generally our Caſe, and that hence it is that you hear of an Old Church and a New in ſo many Towns in this Kingdom, the latter labouring to eſtabliſh it ſelf on the Ruins of the former.* To this we reply,

That the *Separate Churches*, which we now commonly frequent, are not ſet up in Oppoſition to *Yours*, but by a neceſſity which your obſtinate Uncharitableneſs hath brought us under. Could we have enjoy'd thoſe Goſpel-Privileges with you, which our deareſt Saviour hath, by his precious Blood purchaſed for us, and by his Laſt Will and Teſtament bequeathed to us, we had never forſaken *You*. But now, if the more we come to underſtand the Wrong you have done

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us, the more our Minds are alienated from you, you muſt thank your ſelves for that. And wherein you have wronged us, you have already often enough heard, and we are ready once more to declare in part, according as the *Diſcourſe* we are now waiting on you in, ſhall give us the particular Occaſions. All the Oppoſition that is between *our Churches* and *yours* is certainly of your own making. And for our ſetting up Church-Officers, *i. e.* Teachers and Paſtors over our ſelves, we flatly deny, without a good Diſtinction. 'Tis true, we take it as our natural Right, that the Paſtor, to whom we are to commit the Care of our Souls, be of our own free Election, and not impos'd upon us againſt the majority of our Votes, by any that ſhall pretend to a Power ſo to do, as the common manner of the *Church of England* is, and which was not the leaſt of our Grievances, while we were in Communion with *You*. But if by our ſetting up of Officers you mean our conferring the Paſtoral Office upon them, or the Authoritative Inveſting them with it, we deny your Suppoſition. If you know any ſuch among Diſſenters, let them anſwer for themſelves; we aſſure you, *We* are not the Perſons.

And becauſe you fear that we are Labouring to eſtabliſh our Selves on your Ruins; we openly declare your great Miſtake of us. 'Tis our Union and joint Eſtabliſhment on a Reformation according to the Scriptures, that we are Labouring, and have been ſo long praying and waiting for: And if ſuch a *Reformation* will be your *Ruin*, *Miſerere Deus*.

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In vain do you complain of our ſeparate Churches (which yet are no *Independant* Congregations, as you ſuggeſt, tho' they have not that Dependance on *Yours* which you contend for) while your ſelves are the only Cauſes of the Separation. For, let your calmer Reaſon tell us, Who are they that cauſe Diviſions, and deſtroy that Union and Communion of the Churches, which you ſeem to be ſo Zealous for? Are they thoſe that ſtick to the Primitive Apoſtolical Rules and Inſtitutions, or thoſe that make their own dangerous Innovations the Terms of Communion with them? What we have here to ſay in behalf of our Miniſters, muſt be referr'd to your *Third* and moſt conſequential *Article* of our *Indictment*, as its more proper Place, and which we are now next to enter on, and it runs thus,

III. *That the Paſtors, we have choſen, have no lawful Call to the Miniſtry.* This indeed, if it could be prov'd, were enough to convict both *Us* and *Them*, for *Schiſmaticks*. Thoſe Diſſenters, that think themſelves unconcern'd in this Matter, we are not now to anſwer for, nor are we concern'd in what you ſay of them. And as for the *Philadelphians*; we know not what they are expecting; but might we once ſee the *Church of England*, reform'd according to the Scriptures, we would expect a better *Clergy* than moſt of them now are.

I. The Miniſters whom we profeſs to own and to follow, you confeſs to have had (ſome of them) *Epiſcopal Ordinations*; and others only *Presbyterial*. Of the former you are willing to allow (for the Honour of your own Church)

not only the validity of their *Ordination*, but an eminency of *Perſonal Abilities*; but in the exerciſe of their Abilities, you fancy that they are ſome of thoſe, of whom *Ignatius* ſays, *they ſerve the Devil*; and your great Reaſon is, not that they are Men of debauched and ſcandalous Converſation, or of falſe and corrupt Doctrin, but becauſe they refuſe to obey their *Ordinary*, as you ſay they ſolemnly promis'd to do; that is, you think they have broken their Oath of Canonical Obedience. To this we anſwer for them; that if any of 'em have inconſiderately enſlav'd themſelves, and betray'd the Liberties of the Church by an Oath, or Promiſe to any Man, *Ordinary* or *Extraordinary*, to obey them any further than the Apoſtle requir'd to be obey'd by the Churches, 1 *Cor.* 11. 1. *viz.* as far as *he himſelf* obey'd, or *followed Chriſt*, we think 'tis time for them to repent of ſuch an *Oath*. And whereas you tell us, *They can't expect a bleſſing on their Work, while they continue in the Breach of ſuch an Engagement*; We have as great Reaſon to think they can't expect a Bleſſing in keeping it, at leaſt, being now perſwaded of the Evil of it. But yet our Charity obliges us to believe, that they took that *Oath* in no larger Senſe, than is conſiſtent with the Rules of the Goſpel, and are ſure that it is no otherwiſe binding to 'em. And this, we hope, you will not call a *new* or *ſtrange Doctrin* in the Chriſtian Churches. Neither is this to degrade all Biſhops, or to abrogate their Office, or overthrow their Chairs, (as you with ſo ill Deſign ſuggeſt) but to reduce them to that Scripture-

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Foundation, on which alone they may be more glorioufly and firmly Eſtabliſhed.

We cannot but remark with how light a Touch you paſs by the *Foreign Proteſtant Churches*, as one that is afraid of burning his Fingers, pretending to have *nothing to do with them*, on a Suppoſition (which you are willing to allow, that you may ſo rid your Hands of 'em) that *their Call to the Paſtoral Office was extraordinary*, for which you quote ſomething out of *Calvin* and *Beza*, tho' little to your Purpoſe. In what Senſe theſe Churches underſtand the extraordinarineſs of their Call, they themſelves are beſt able to inform you. Did they ever, any of them, pretend to be rapt up into the third Heavens, where *Paul* once was, there to receive a new *Call* and *Commiſſion*, differing from what Chriſt and his firſt Apoſtles delivered to, and left with the Churches? By what Angel, or *Bathkol*, or Viſion do they ſay this *Extraordinary Call* was given them? When, and on whom was it that the Holy Spirit came down in the Form of *Cloven Tongues*, to Seal them a Commiſſion, to go out and Preach another Goſpel, and to lay a new Foundation of the Goſpel Miniſtry? Can you bring us any Tidings of any thing like this out of their Writings, or if you could, would you not eaſily anſwer it by, *Gal* 1.8 But how far are they from ſuch vain Dreams as theſe? *Monſ. Turretin* will tell you in what Senſe they take their *Call* to have been *Extraordinary*. *Si Ordinarium dicitur, quod Ordini primitus & diviniſtituto eſt Conſentaneum, poteſt dici noſtra Vocatio Ordinaria; ſed ſi æquivoce pro eo ſumitur, quod inveterata conſuetudine, qualiſcunq; illa ſit,* *Turretin. de Neceſſaria Seceſſione ab Eccleſ. Rom.* p. 228.

publice est acceptum, extraordinaria dicenda erit; quia plurimum abfuit ab ea Consuetudine & More, qui in Ecclesia Romana inoleverat. If Ordinary be taken for that which is agreeable to the Order of Primitive and Divine Institution, then our Call is Ordinary; but if it be taken equivocally for that which is by long Custom, of any kind, commonly receiv'd, then may it be call'd Extraordinary, because so very different from that use and manner which had so long obtain'd in the Church of Rome. You see now in what Sense they take their *Call* to be *Extraordinary*. The Deliverance of the Church out of Mystical *Egypt* and *Babylon* was indeed an *Extraordinary* Deliverance; but their *Call* to the Ministry was the *ordinary Call* of the Gospel; that Spirit of Wisdom, Faith, Patience, Zeal, Self-denyal, by which they were divinely influenced in their Reformation was *Extraordinary*; and it had been better for the *Church of England*, if her's had not been in this respect too *Ordinary*. In the same Sense as the Reformation of *Johoshaphat*, *Hezekiah* and *Josiah* was *Extraordinary* in comparison of that of some other Good Kings, who are noted for sparing the *High Places*, so may the *Call* of these *Foreign Churches* be said to be *Extraordinary*; but that they acted by the ordinary Rule of the Holy Scriptures, and the Practice of the Primitive Church, they constantly affirm. O Sir! How poor an Escape have you endeavour'd to make this way; that you may seem to be a little more Courteous to *Foreigners* than to your own *Country-Men*; how pitiful a *Go by* is this, and as foreign to *Calvin*'s Sense, as *these Churches* are to *Your's*? What a strain will it cost you now to deliver your self

M. Claud History of the Reformation, Part 4. p. 86. & 89.

ſelf from the *Hornes* of this *Dilemma*, either to acquit *Us* of what you have charg'd us with, or condemn all the *Proteſtant Churches* in the World, that are not of *your* Conſtitution and Communion? And Excommunicate us all as Heathens and Hereticks, that have no Goſpel-Miniſtry, nor Ordinances among them, as the Church of *Rome* doth, whom you hereby juſtify in all their Perſecutions and barbarous Severities againſt them, which looks very ill in a Proteſtant, eſpecially at ſuch a Time as this. But that our Miniſters have not taken upon them the ſacred Function in *a new Way, that was never approv'd in ancient Times*, ſhall be prov'd (as you demand) by a ſight of their *Patent* and *Commiſſion* (if you have Eyes to read it) in its proper Place.

II. Next you prepare to bring on your Tryal againſt a *ſecond ſort of Teachers, who claim a Title to the Miniſtry, as being Ordain'd by Presbyters.* And indeed when you ſhall have prov'd this way of *Ordination* to be *Schiſmatical*, you will have done ſomething in the Service of your Cauſe; wherein if *Saying* were *Proving*, and *Confidence* were good *Evidence*, doubtleſs you would not fail. But this being the main Hinge, on which the whole Controverſy turns, it will be neceſſary to ſpend a little more Time with you here. And firſt you make your *Trip* at our Miniſters *Heels*, by ſtriking at the *Stone* on which they ſtand; but you will find it is a *Rock*, againſt which you may daſh your own Feet, but which will not move for all the Kicks you can make at it. The main Scripture, which, with all your might you heave at, is that of, 1 *Tim.* 4. 14. *Neglect not the Gift that is*

in thee, which is given unto thee by Prophecy, with the laying on of the Hands of the Presbytery.

Againſt the generally approved Senſe of this Scripture, you are pleas'd to Quote us *Calvin* himſelf, whom you miſtakingly call the Father of our Diſcipline; and would have us to believe that he could find no ſuch Matter in this *Text*; and that he thought Presbytery here ſignifies but the *Office of a Presbyter*; and ſo read to us the Senſe of the *Text* thus. *That* Timothy *ſhould not neglect, but be careful to exerciſe that Presbyterial Office, or Power which was committed to him by laying on of Hands.* Now by the way, leſt you ſhould hereafter forget, pray take notice that you have now granted that it was to the *Office of a Presbyter* that *Timothy* was now ordain'd, not to that of a *Biſhop*, or an *Evangeliſt*. But as for what you refer us to out of *Calvin*'s *Inſtitutions*: We find that he was there offering ſome Obſervations, which he had gather'd out of the Scriptures of the New Teſtament, concerning the *Ordination* of ſuch as are to ſerve in the Office of the Miniſtry; and tells us that it is certain the whole Multitude of the People were not to impoſe Hands on their Miniſters in their Ordination, but only ſuch as were themſelves Paſtors in Office, to whom alone the ordaining Power belongs, tho' he leaves it uncertain, whether the Hands of many were always laid on, in every ſolemn Act of Ordination, but produces Scripture-Inſtances that it was ſo done in the *Ordination* of *Deacons*, Act. 6. 6. and in the *Ordination* of *Paul* and *Barnabas*, Act. 13. 3. But that

Paul

Paul here minds *Timothy*, that he had ordain'd him with his own Hands (tho' not exclusively of all others, or with his own Hand only; but rather that he was the principal Person, and the only Apostle concerned in that Ordination) and therefore Admonishes him to stir up the Gift that was in him, by the *Imposition of his Hands*. And afterward gives us his *private Opinion*, that when the Apostle mentions to *Timothy*, in his other Epistle, the Hands of the *Presbytery*, that he is not there minding him so much of the manner of his *Ordination* by the *College of Presbyters*, of whom *Paul* was one and the chief in that Action, but rather that he should mind *Ipsam Ordinationem*, his *Ordination it self*, and the great and glorious *Ends* of it. q. d. *Fac ut Gratia quam per manuum impositionem recepisti, quum te Presbyterum Crearem, non sit irrita. That so the Grace which he had receiv'd, when he ordain'd him a Minister of the Gospel, or a Presbyter, might not prove in vain.* And now how far *Calvin* is like to serve *your* Purpose, or to disserve *ours*, we leave to any competent impartial Judge. And yet if you think your Notion of *Calvin*'s Sense be the right, we must tell you, you are a *Dissenter* from the generality of the most Learned of your own Church. Mr. *Herbert Thorndike* will tell you; " If we take not our Marks amiss, " we shall find Argument enough, at least at " the beginning, for the concurrence of Pres- " byters with the Bishop in making of Presby- " ters, and other inferior Orders In the first " Place, those general Passages of the Fathers. " Wherein is witnessed, that the *Presbytery* was " a *Bench*, assistent to the *Bishop*, without Advice

" whereof nothing of Moment was done, must " needs be drawn into Consequence, to argue " that it had effect in a particular of this weight. " Then the Ordination of *Timothy*, by *Imposi-* " *tion of Hands of the Presbytery* will prove no " less. Indeed, says he, 'tis well known that " the Word πρεσβυτέριον in Ecclesiastical Writers, " signifies divers times the Office and Rank of " Presbyters, which Signification divers here " embrace; expounding *Imposition of Hands* " *of the Presbytery* to mean that by which the " Rank of Presbyter was conferr'd. But the " Apostles Words running as they do, μετ' " ἐπιθέσεως τῶν χειρῶν τοῦ πρεσβυτερίου, oblige a Man " to ask, when he is come as far as the *Impo-* " *sition of Hands*, of whom, or whose *Hands* " they were he speaketh of, which the next " Words satisfy. Had it been μετὰ χειροθεσίας " τοῦ πρεσβυτερίου, the Sense might better have been " diverted, but running as it doth, with the " Article μετ' ἐπιθέσεως τῶν χειρῶν τοῦ πρεσβυτερίου with " *Imposition of* [*the*] *Hands*, it remaineth that it " be specified in the next Words, *whose Hands* " were Imposed. Thus this Word πρεσβυτέριον " in the Gospel, *Luk.* 22. 66. and in *Ignatius*'s " Epistles signifieth the *College of Presbyters*, " which hath the Nature and Respect of a Per- " son in Law, and therefore is read in the sin- " gular, for the whole *Bench*; which being as- " sembled and set, is call'd συνέδριον in both " Places; and in *Cornelius* of *Rome* his Epistle " to St. *Cyprian*, where he saith, *Placuit contra-* " *here Presbyterium.* Now Sir here's *your* Mr. *Thorndike* against what you would impose on *our Calvins*. But besides this, we Answer,

1. If

1. If the Word *Presbytery* is here to be understood of the *Office*, then will it follow, (as we have before noted) that *Timothy*'s Office was the Office of a *Presbyter*; What then is become of *Timothy*'s *Episcopacy*, which you so learnedly plead for in your *Discourse of Church-Government?* Or When and by Whom was it that he was created *Bishop?*

2. *Camerarius* tells us that it is πρεσβυτερεῖον, and not πρεσβυτέριον, which imports the *Office of a Presbyter*. So that here's a foul mistake of the *Presbytery* for the *Presbyterate*, the Persons for the Office.

3. *Ignatius*, who liv'd very near the Times of the Apostles, and therefore may well be presum'd to have understood the Meaning and Use of this Word, tells us, τὶ δὲ πρεσβυτέριον ἐστὶν ἀλλ' ἢ σύστημα ἱερὸν, σύμβουλοι, καὶ συνεδρευταὶ τοῦ ἐπισκόπου. *What is the Presbytery other than the Sacred Company, who are the Bishops Counsellors and Assessours?* This Sense *Clemens Alexandrinus*, and some others of the Primitive Fathers give of it; nor was it ever taken in any other Sense by the Fathers till *Origen*; nor in any Place of the New Testament doth it signify any other than the *Company of Presbyters*, as *Luk.* 22. 66. *Act.* 22. 5. And this Mr. *Selden* himself is forc'd to confess, tho', being an *Erastian* in his Judgment, he was loth to allow the Word in this Text to signifie a *College of Presbyters*, lest he should be forc'd to allow them the *Power of Excommunication*.

Ignat. Epist. ad Trall.

De Synedr. l. 1. Cap. 14. 560.

4. To put this Sense upon the Word *Presbyter* in this *Text*, and to make it to signify the *Office*, is such an Inversion and Disturbance of the natural

natural Order of the Word, as is never to be allow'd but in case of plain Necessity, lest we make the Sacred Scriptures a Nose of Wax, of which Mr. *Thorndike* was too wise to be Guilty.

5. And yet if you will needs take *Presbytery* here for the *Office of a Presbyter*, which *Calvin* doth not do, but rather for the *Solemn Act*, by which the *Office* is conferr'd; see how little it will be to your Advantage. Doth it not then clearly follow, that 'tis by vertue of the *Office* it self, and not by any Degree that some have obtain'd in it above others, that Men are to be Ordain'd into the Ministry? So that in whomsoever the *Office of a Presbyter* is found, there is this *Power of Ordaining others*. Have you not then ingenuously, or inadvertently, granted to our Ministers all that they demand in this Matter, and prov'd it for 'em too from *Calvin*, whom you pretend to alledge against 'em?

To what a pass now have you brought your *Episcopal Ordination*? Are these the only Men that have Power to Ordain a Presbyter: Or have they any Power or Authority at all to do it, but as they are themselves *Presbyters*? What is a *Bishop*, but a *Presbyter* set in a higher Degree for Clerical Order and Government sake, but as to *Office*, the same with the *Presbyter*? And therefore it is that the Titles are so promiscuously and indifferently us'd in the Holy Scriptures. Nor did the *Apostles* themselves Ordain, as *Apostles*, but as *Presbyters*, which is the Title they own in their Epistles, and claim as their Honour. And that it is the *Presbyter*, not the

Bishop

Biſhop (*i. e.* conſider'd only as ſuch) that muſt *Ordain*, is put beyond Controverſy by a rul'd Caſe, that a Biſhop or Prelate Ordain'd *per ſaltum*, (*i. e.* who never had the Ordination of a *Presbyter* himſelf, but only of a *Biſhop*) can neither Conſecrate, nor adminiſter the Sacrament of the Lord's Body, nor Ordain a *Presbyter*. Tho', for the neceſſary Ends of Clerical Order and Government, the *Biſhop* be ſet in a ſuperiour Degree of Superintendency, and conſequently his Preſence and authoritative Concurrence be neceſſary, with a ſelect Number of his beſt qualify'd *Presbyters*, to confer Orders, and to ſee the Laws of Chriſt duly executed in his Church; yet where this Power is abus'd (than which nothing in the World is apter, nor hath been more abus'd) where the Churches are impos'd upon, and *Presbyters* tyrannically raviſh'd of their juſt Rights and Priviledges, and cauſeleſly caſt out of *Epiſcopal Communion*; the *Preſbyter* is nevertheleſs a *Presbyter*, as to all the Parts and Purpoſes of his *Office*. He may be robb'd of his *Pulpit*, but not of his *Office*; robb'd of his *Maintenance*, but not of his *Right* to it; robb'd of his *Liberty*, but not of his *Relation* to Chriſt, nor to his *Church*. In the Holy Scriptures we find that *Presbyters* (as ſuch) are veſted with the Power of Rule and Government in the Houſe of God, 1 *Tim.* 5. 17. *Act.* 20. 17. & 28. But of the Inveſtiture of *Prelates*, or their *Ordination* by *Impoſition of Hands*, as of an *Office* diſtinct and different from that of the *Presbyter*, we read not one Word in all the New Teſtament. By what Law of Chriſt then doth he claim a deſpotical Power over his

Presby-

Presbyters, any other than as the Head and Moderator of their common Council, and in whose Name, and with whose Concurrence (for Order and Government sake) all the necessary Canons and By-Laws that conduce to the Peace, Profit and Edification of the Churches committed to their Care, ought to be issued and established? Will you tell us; they are the *Apostle's Successors in Power and Authority?* So are *Our Presbyters* too, 1 *Pet.* 5. 1, 2, 3. both in Faith and Doctrin, and all Things that are Common and Essential to the *Office*. *Prelacy* is not of the *Office*, *per se*, but only *per Accidens*, and which, when duly exercis'd, honourably conduces to the *bene Esse* of the Church, but is not constitutive of its *Esse*. We have hear'd indeed of *no Bishop no King*, and ever thought it extravagant enough; but never heard of *no Bishop no Church* till now.

Again, you would have us to believe that, *Presbytery, being a Name of Dignity, is sometimes attributed to Ecclesiastical Officers of the highest Rank, as St.* Peter *and St.* John *call themselves Presbyters*, and therefore it must needs here signify a *Company of Bishops*. To this we Reply,

1. That the Word *Presbytery* was never so taken for a *Company of Bishops* only, (of which there was but one in one Church) which is the limited Sense, either in the Times of the Apostles, or of the first Centuries of the Church, perhaps not till *Chrysostome*'s Time; but alway for the *Collegium Presbyterorum*; and before we can believe that it is to be otherwise taken in this *Text*, you must prove it.

2. If

2. If the Word muſt be taken in your Senſe for a *Company of Biſhops*, then either there is no *particular Church*, tho' *Dioceſan*, that hath any *Presbytery* of its own, or there muſt be more *Biſhops* than *One* in every ſuch Church, or elſe you muſt ſay that your *one Biſhop* is a *Company of Biſhops*.

3. What can you infer, in this Caſe, from *Peter*'s and *John*'s aſſuming the Title of *Presbyter*, but that in all the common Acts of Eccleſiaſtical Government and Diſcipline they acted as *Preſbyters*, and not as *Apoſtles*, And what then have you gotten by this Argument?

But you urge again, *That* Timothy *was a Biſhop, and had Juriſdiction over Presbyters; therefore Presbyters could not Ordain him to his Office; for they could not communicate a Power which they never receiv'd.* To this we Anſwer,

1. That *Timothy* was an *Evangeliſt*, 2 *Tim.* 4. 5. which, if it ſignify'd any more than a *Preacher of the Goſpel*, which was the Work of every *Presbyter*, then it muſt ſignify ſomething more than an *Ordinary Biſhop*, to which he had no particular *Ordination*, but the *Apoſtles Election* of him, as his *Companion*, and his Miſſion to ſome particular Services in the Churches of *Paul*'s planting. So that the *Presbytery* Ordain'd him only as a *Presbyter*, not as an *Evangeliſt*, nor as a *Biſhop*, about which we have no Form, Rule or Precedent in the Scripture.

2. Whereas you ſay, *They could not communicate a Power which they never receiv'd*; We Anſwer, That in this Caſe there was no need of it; they Ordain'd him as a *Presbyter*, and what other Titles he afterward arriv'd to, were but Accidental.

dental. But this Reason of yours seems to be bottom'd on a great *Mistake*, viz. That the Ordainers communicate the ministerial Power to the Persons Ordained; whereas it is Christ that communicates the Pastoral Power and Authority by his *Charter* of the Gospel; the Power is deriv'd from *Christ*, not from the *Ordainers*; As the *Major* of a City has his Authority from the *Charter*, granted by the *King*, and not from the *Recorder*, who invests him in his *Office*. And yet neither is this true, that an inferiour Officer may not invest one of a superiour Order in his Office, else what have the *Bishops* to do at the Coronation of *Kings*, unless you will make the *Regal* to be an *Inferior Office* to that of the *Bishop*; which if you do, you may next pretend to an *absolving and deposing Power* too.

But you tell us again, *That we do not find in Scripture, That to mere Presbyters any such Authority was ever committed; nor are there any Footsteps of it in Antiquity.* And we tell you, That we find not in Scripture, nor in Antiquity, that this Authority was ever committed to any other than *Presbyters*: But if you insist, That they must not be *mere Presbyters*, we Reply,

1. How do you prove that either *Simeon*, that was called *Niger*, or *Lucius* of *Cyrene*, or *Manaen*, who were commanded from Heaven, *Act.* 13. 1, 2. to ordain *Paul* and *Barnabas*, were any of them, at that time, more than *mere Presbyters* as to Matter of Office?

2. Where do you find, in all the Books of the New Testament, not only that a *mere Bishop*, but that any *one single Person*, whether *Bishop*, or *Evangelist*, or *Apostle*, or any other, besides

our Lord Jesus Christ himself, did ever celebrate this Ordinance of *Ordination*, without the assistance of some others, more or less of the *Presbytery?* If you instance in *Paul*'s ordaining *Timothy* with his own Hands; will that prove that it was with his own Hands alone, especially while he tells us so expresly, in words at length, and not in figures, That it was done by the Hands of the *Presbytery?*

3. We will propose you a *Case*, which is possible, tho' we hope will never be real. Suppose the Churches of Christ should be reduc'd to a very few, and the Bishops of these few should all turn Hereticks, or Persecutors of the Orthodox, and cast them out of their Communion, the *Presbyters* retaining their Integrity: These *Presbyters*, by your Doctrin, cannot ordain so much as a *Presbyter*, to continue a Succession, much less can they create a *Bishop* to do it: Must the whole Church then be extinct for lack of a *Bishop* to Head them? Or would you expect to have one rais'd from the *Dead*, or sent back out of *Heaven* to do it?

4. As for *Antiquity*; There is nothing more clear than that in the Primitive Churches the *Bishops* and their *Presbyters* alway acted in Conjunction in all Acts of Church Discipline, both of Excommunication, Restauration, Confirmation and Ordination; And in the Banishment or Absence of their *Bishops*, the *Presbyters* alone, without the presence of any other *Bishop*, did, by his order and allowance (which he could not have done, had it not been a thing in it self lawful) execute all that the *Bishop* was to have done

done in Person among them. Nay, St. *Jerom* will tell you that the *Presbyters* have Power to Ordain a *Bishop* over them, and invest him with his *Episcopal Authority*, as they did at *Alexandria*. Sir, There was a Time within the Memory of Man, that *Our Bishops* were banished from their *Clergy* in *England*, and what, was the Whole *Church of* England then extinct, and cut off from the *Head Christ?* Doth eternal Salvation go and come with *Lawn-Sleeves?* Yet once more, you tell us, *That the Office which* Timothy *had was given him by Prophecy*, 1 Tim. 4. 14. *Or according to the Prophesies, which went before of him*, 1 Tim. 1. 18. *His Ordination therefore must have been an extraordinary Thing, and not to be drawn into Precedent, except in parallel Cases. But our Pastors, you suppose, do not pretend that they are mark'd out by Prophecy.*

1. We answer, These Prophesies, whatever they were, concerning *Timothy*, respected his *Person*, and not the *manner of his Ordination.*

2. It is very probable that the Apostles had a more than ordinary Direction, relating to the choice of Ministers, or Church-Officers many times in their Days, *Acts* 20. 28. It is there said, That the Elders of the Church of *Ephesus* were made Overseers of their Flocks by the *Holy Ghost*, i. e. as some think, their Choice and Nomination was by Direction of the *Holy Spirit* of God. And *Clemens Romanus* says, That the Apostles in those Days ordained *Bishops* or *Presbyters* πνεύματι δοκιμάζοντες καὶ προγνώσιν εἰλήφοτες τέλειαν, &c. *Discerning by the Spirit, and having a perfect Knowledge whom they should Ordain.* But what is all this to the way of Ordaining by

Presbyters

Presbyters is an *extraordinary Thing, and not to be drawn into Precedent.* It's probable that it had been foretold by ſome one or other, that *Timothy* would be a faithful and eminent Miniſter of Chriſt; who but you would have concluded from thence, That his *Ordination* by *Presbyters* was an *extraordinary Caſe?*

3. May you not as pertinently argue, That none of the Ordinations, done by the Impoſition of the Hands of the Apoſtles, are to be drawn into Precedent; becauſe theſe were extraordinary Caſes, the Apoſtles being extraordinary Perſons, who had an extraordinary and immediate Miſſion from Chriſt himſelf; nor do we know of any Biſhops that now pretend to be marked out by an *immediate Call* from Chriſt, or any *Prophecy* of their *extraordinary Uſefulneſs*, that have gone before of 'em.

But Sir, Before you had given your ſelf and us all this Trouble to ſo little purpoſe, you had done much better to have ſate down and conſidered how you could have anſwered Mr. *John Owen*'s ten Arguments from Scripture and Antiquity, proving Ordination by *Presbyters*, without *Biſhops* to be valid; to which, (to ſave Labour of Tranſcribing) we refer thoſe that are willing to ſee much more on this Subject. *Owen*'s Plea for Scripture Ordination.

III. The Declamation which you make againſt *popular Ordination*, we are not at all concern'd in, but join with you in our hearty Wiſhes, that they that are, would deeply conſider it.

Now to conclude this, your third *Section*, Having read out our Indictment in all the Articles of it, and examin'd it after your manner; you come to ſum up the *Evidence*, or what you call *Evident*, and bring in the *Bill* againſt us; that we have in all theſe Reſpects, exceeded the *Novatians*, *Donatiſts* and *Meletians*. But before you proceed to your *Damnatory Sentence*, we hope your Charity will take into Conſideration what we have already, ſo briefly offer'd in our own *Defence*, and what we have yet further to plead for our ſelves, as your following *Diſcourſe* ſhall give us Occaſion.

Sect. 4. Your fourth *Section* (in which you pretend to blow us wholly up, and to beat us out of all our *Faſtneſſes*, and not to leave *us* a *Rag* to cover our *Nakedneſs* with) is a Collection of juſt half a dozen of ſome little Things, which you have pickt up ſome-where behind our Backs, and what you thought your ſelf able to deal with; and theſe you ſet up as ſo many *Cocks of Clouts* to try your Skill upon, and to entertain your Self and your Readers with; and repreſent it to the World, as *the ſum of what has been ſaid in our Defence*: But if you wou'd have done your Self and your Readers right, you ought to have quoted the *Authors*, out of which you had taken thoſe Things. Neither is it ſo eaſie, as you ſeem to hope, to make the thinking part of the World, at this time of the day, to believe, that a Man of your Figure and Reading, muſt not needs be conſcious

ſcious to himſelf of other Things. But this, it ſeems, is what you thought fit to make your Remarks upon; wherein you have not ſhown that Chriſtian *Charity*, nor common *Ingenuity*, which might juſtly have been expected from the fair Pretenſions of your *Introduction*. Yet what you are here pleaſed, under this Form, to offer us, and to declare to the World in our Names, we muſt take ſuch notice of as it doth deſerve.

1. That which you thought fit to ſet in the Front of what you call *Our Arguments*, is this. *It has been ſaid, That notwithſtanding our preſent Separation from you, yet we are One with you, becauſe we both adhere to the ſame Doctrin.*

This, you ſay, is *one Point gain'd of us, that now you are treated with ſofter Language than formerly you were:* And yet this doth not pleaſe you neither, but account *ruder* Language leſs dangerous; becauſe this ſeems to repreſent Communion with you an indifferent Thing. Sir, This is unaccountably ſtrange, that Communion with you ſhould be the Thing you ſo zealouſly contend for, and yet are affraid of our coming too near to you. It ſeems the Principles of *Moderation* are too dull and phlegmatick to agree with your *rectify'd Spirit of Charity*, whereby you declare your ſelf to be no *Trimmer*, but a *Tantivy*.

Before you had given us your *Comments* on this *Argument*, you ſhould have put it into the *Form* of an *Argument*, and have ſhewn the World what it is that we pretend to prove by it. We ſuppoſe the ſenſe of it muſt run thus:

If we are One with you in Doctrin, then our Separation from you in ſome other things is not Schiſmatical.

But we are One with you in Doctrin: Ergo.

Here we might in juſtice have expected that you ſhould have cited our *Author* of this *Argument* before you had called it *Ours:* But inſtead of that you tell us, *That you know nothing that hath been more commonly urg'd of late in our Vindication.* Sir, This is not fair, much leſs charitable dealing with us; for we know not who they are of us that will own this *Argument.* For,

1. The *Conſequence* of the *Major* we deny, as well as you, and therefore diſown it; we do not think, nor do our Miniſters teach us, *That Oneneſs in Doctrin* is enough to juſtify a *Separation in outward Communion* from being *Schiſmatical*; and had we no greater thing to warrant our *Separation* from you, we ſhould not think our ſelves innocent.

2. Neither do we own the *Minor* of this *Argument*, without ſome Exceptions. For we dare not ſay, That we are perfectly *One* with you in *Doctrin:* There are ſome things in the *Doctrin* that is commonly preach'd among you that is too *Arminian*, and too *Romiſh* for us to be *One* with you in it. But this is what we ſay, and will ſtand to; that as far as your *Doctrin* is *One* with that which is taught us in the *Holy Scriptures*, the Faith which was once de-

delivered unto the Saints; ſo far we are One with you. And as far as our *Separation* from you is not without juſt Cauſe, ſo far it is not Shiſmatical. So then what you ſay, in approbrious Deſcant,

1. On the *Minor* of this *Argument*, is but *Petitio Principij*, a ſhameful begging the Queſtion, 'till you have prov'd that to be true, which you ſay *you think*, viz. *That what is publiſhed by many of our Party in their printed Books, and even in their Catechiſms is Heterodox to the pure Apoſtolical Doctrin, and yet generally embraced by us.* What you upbraid us with from the Zeal of the *Independents*, to ſecure to themſelves their own *Proſelites*, is but what your ſelves are altogether as guilty of in your own Caſe; and which indeed is a piece of Natural Politicks, ariſing from the Principle of Self-preſervation, and common to all Mankind, and in nothing more than in Religious Society.

As for thoſe *uſeful Hints*, which you ſuggeſt from the *Heads of Arguments ſubſcrib'd by our Miniſters of different Sects*, we have reaſon to look upon as Impertinent, further than the Caſes are parallel; yet ſeeing you are willing to make ſomething on't, we will appeal to your ſelves, and to all the World, that have obſerv'd the Grounds and Circumſtances of the Breaches that have been made upon us, and the Controverſies that have been now almoſt theſe forty Years depending between us, whe-

ther we or our Miniſters did ſeparate from you, before the utmoſt Endeavours were us'd, by Remonſtrances, Arguments, Petitions, Intreaties and Accommodations, but all in vain to prevent our Departure, or rather our Excluſion from you. You were reſolved to kick us out of your Communion, and now you upbraid us for leaving you without your *Conſent*. And as for what you quote us out of St. *Cyprian*, ſpeaking of the *Novatians*, and out of St. *Chryſoſtom* againſt the *Separatiſts* of thoſe Times, we ſhall take our ſelves to be concern'd in when you have truly parallelled the Caſe, and prov'd your ſelves and your Church to be as pure in *Doctrin*, and as far from a *Tyrannical Impoſing* of new Conditions of Communion as they were; and us to be as Heretical and Corrupt in Doctrin and Manners, as the Schiſmaticks of their Days were: But 'till this be done, you do but abuſe your Authors and expoſe your ſelf.

II. Having done with the *Minor*, you draw up your Forces againſt the *Major*; and here you endeavour to choak us with your δίς κρα'μβη of *Catholick Union*; and begin to plead

1. From the *Abſurdity of ſaying we are One with you, being divided from you as we are*. And how is this? Not in *Doctrin*, any further than you are divided from Chriſt, nor any more than you are divided among your ſelves; not in *Affection*, unleſs the Diviſion be wholly on your ſide; not in any thing wherein the Vitality

lity of *Eſſence* of the Catholick Chriſtian Union doth conſiſt: Ay, but we are divided from you as to *outward Communion*, and therefore can never be *One* with you, whatever the Union be in any other Reſpects, as if *Ens and Unum* did now ceaſe to be Convertible Terms, as heretofore they were alway taken to be. We are divided as to *outward Communion*, and that mortally deſtroys the Union. True, Sir, we are, to our ſorrow, thus divided from you and by you. And now being thus divided; *The Church, both Univerſal and Particular muſt be conſider'd as a Political Body; and then if a Company withdraw themſelves from it, and ſhake off all Dependance on it and Communion with it* (all Communion, if you ſpeak this to us, you muſt mean all outward Communion, in thoſe Ceremonious Acts of Worſhip, and Matters of Diſcipline that lie in Controveſie betwixt us) they cannot be of the *ſame Body* that they deſerted. And then it muſt needs follow, That *Your* Church being Politically in Communion with the CATHOLICK, and *Ours* out of Communion with you, we are but as ſo many dead Branches that have loſt their Union with the *Body*, and all the Influxes of Life from the Head. How gladly then would you ſee us in the Fire, that you may warm your ſelves by us? Sure 'tis well for thoſe of us you are ſo angry with, that the *Act*, *De Hæroticis comburendis* is repeal'd. But this Inference of yours you pretend to illuſtrate by ſeveral pat Inſtances. *The Empire of* Perſia, you ſay, *was one Body under* Darius; *but was not ſo*

when divided into ſeveral Kingdoms under the Succeſſors of Alexander. Very critically obſerv'd; when thus divided, they were not *One* particular Political Body as before, yet were they true parts of *One* and the ſame Univerſal World ſtill, tho' divided into particular National Polities, yet united ſtill in all the common Intereſts of Human Nature and Society. So a *City is one Body*; but the Colonies that iſſue out from it, and are form'd into other Cities, under their own proper Laws and Juriſdiction, cannot be Numerically, and perhaps are not Specificially one Political Body; yet they are *one Kingdom*, and govern'd by the ſame common Laws and Statutes of the Kingdom: And what the Kingdom is the worſe for this Variety, or Diverſification of particlar Political Forms, no Man can tell. Nay, ſuppoſe this Separation be made by a Revolt, or Diſlike of the Conſtitution of the Government of the City, or of their Manners and Formalities, and without the Publick Conſent; we hope this will not *Out-law* them, nor Disfranchize them of any of their National Privileges and Rights, as long as they behave themſelves with due Loyalty to their Sovereign, and peaceably to their Fellow-Subjects. Now, you ſay, *a Church hath this Communion with a City, and with all Corporations.* Very true, ſo the Church at *Jeruſalem* was once the *Univerſal Church* and *Goſpel Metropolis:* But if all thoſe particular Churches that have been ſeparated from it, into Political Bodies, not only Numerically, but Specifically diſtinct, under their own

own Laws and Forms of Government, Worſhip and Diſcipline, and different from that of the firſt Mother-Church, from which they iſſued, be no more Churches becauſe of theſe different *outward Communions*, wherein they are not one with the firſt Church, nor with one another; then it muſt needs follow that *You* are no more a Church of Chriſt than *We*; and ſo you have thus far ſet us on even Ground with your ſelves; nor hath any one need *to renounce the uſe of the Words, or affront the common Senſe of Mankind* to draw this Concluſion from your Premiſes.

2. You plead from a ſuppoſed *Inconſiſtency it hath with Church Government, and its Deſtructiveneſs of the Church it ſelf; and a vain excuſe, you ſay 'twill be for Men to ſay, that they are at an Agreement with the Church in Doctrin, while, by their Diviſions they are tearing the Church in Pieces.* And this you are at the Pains to Illuſtrate, by Compariſons Military, Civil and Domeſtick, as if it were an hard Matter to beat this Notion into Mens Heads. But when all is done, you won't imagine how little We think our ſelves concern'd in it; for you have granted us, and we cannot forget it, that it muſt be a *Cauſeleſs Separation*, or elſe it is not what you are declaiming on; therefore till it appear that our Separation from the *Church of England* is *Cauſeleſs*, we are not the Perſons that are like to be hurt by your Arrows. And as for our Officers, by whoſe Conduct we are guided in the Matters of God and of our Souls, they

they are neither Mutinous, nor Seditious, nor Self-Intruders, as by your Compariſons you would Inſinuate, but generally as well qualify'd, and altogether as lawfully call'd and commiſſion'd, and as fully inveſted with the miniſterial Office, according to the Rules of the Holy Scriptures, as any of your Selves, as we have already prov'd; ſo that this Argument you may now lay aſide among your broken Weapons, till you find a proper Occaſion for it.

3. You argue from its *Inconſiſtency with the Notion of Schiſm, as it is expreſs'd in the Holy Scripture*, i. e. If the Scripture-Notion of Schiſm were the ſame with Yours. And for this your only Inſtance is the *Schiſm that was once in the Church of* Corinth, where every one ſaid, *I am of* Paul, *or I of* Apollas, *or I of* Cephas. But this Faction among the Diſciples at *Corinth*, you told us in your ſecond *Section*, was but a *Schiſm within* the Church, not *from* it, and therefore will not give us the full Notion of *Schiſm*, according to your own apprehenſion of it. But we will let this paſs for an Impertinence, having already granted you more than this Inſtance can pretend to prove, *viz.* that *Oneneſs in Doctrin* is not always enough to juſtify a Separation from *outward Communion*. 'Tis in your miſapplying it to us that your great Miſtake lies, ſuppoſing that our Separation from you is as *Cauſeleſs* as were the Factious Diviſions of thoſe in the Church of *Corinth*, which is the Thing that's yet to be prov'd.

But

But it ſeems to us by the Tenour of your *Diſcourſe* from top to bottom; that let a Church be what it will, either as to its Conſtitution, or its individual Members, ever ſo Corrupt in Doctrin, Superſtitious in Worſhip, or Filthy in Converſation, and degenerated from Scripture Rules and Inſtitution; yet while they hold together in *outward Communion*, as the Church of *Rome* hath done, both before and ſince the Proteſtant Reformation, there is nothing in it that deſerves the Name of *Schiſm*, or that will juſtifie a Seperation from it. Pray tell us plainly whoſe Cauſe it is you are pleading under the Name of the *Church of England?* Have you never conſider'd the Differences that there were in the Apoſtle's Days between the Churches of the Chriſtian *Jewes* and thoſe of the *Gentiles*, in reſpect of *Rites* and *Ceremonies* and *outward Communion*; and don't you know to what a height theſe Differences were kept up by the Churches that were ſtill ſo fond of their *old Way*, that there was no Uniting them in this Point? That *Paul*, for his *Non-Conformity* to 'em, could not ſhew his Face among 'em at *Jeruſalem*, without danger of his Life? Have you not read what a feud there was once between *Him* and *Peter* on this Account, *Gal.* 2. 11, 12, 13, 14. And how much ado the Apoſtle *Paul* had to preſerve the Churches of the *Gentiles* from being bigotted to their Superſtitions? Now pray tell us, whether the Church at *Jeruſalem*, or that at *Antioch* were the true Church; or whether of theſe Two you will pleaſe to cut off for the *Schiſmatick*; or whether the *Catholick Union* were pre-

preſerv'd between them both, notwithſtanding theſe wide Deffences and Diſſentions in external Rites and Communion? But if theſe were ſtill *One* in *Catholick Union*, we underſtand not: How leſs Matters than theſe ſhould make the Conformiſts and Non-Conformiſts of *England* to be *Two*, ſo as that *We* muſt be condemn'd for Schiſmaticks rather than *You*.

4. You argue from the *Scripture Diſtinction of the Schiſmatick from the approv'd*; and then tell us that *thoſe that live in Conformity to your Church are the approved and the beloved of God*; ay, Sir, the approved Drunkards and Swearers, the beloved Woremongers and Adulterers, *&c.* for ſuch are too many of thoſe who are allowed Communion with you; but we are the *Schiſmaticks*, and the *Reprobates*, becauſe you have caſt us out, and will not admit us to your Communion without Conformity to your Ceremonies. Doth not the Church of *Rome* tell us the ſame thing? How generally and looſly do you talk of Conformity to the Church, without making any difference of what is Good, or what is Evil in it, or what will juſtify a Separation from it, and what will not; the ſame Argument ſerves indifferently both *Rome* and *You*. The high Preſumption you have of your Purity, and the Inoffenſiveneſs of your Terms of Communion is no more than what is common to the Biggots of the corrupteſt Church and Faction in the World; But till it be better prov'd than hitherto it hath been, you muſt excuſe us that we cannot take *You* to be *the Approv'd*,

Approv'd, ſo as to condemn *our Selves* for the *Schiſmaticks*, in not Communicating with you on ſuch Terms as the Holy Scripture doth not require, and our own Conſciences are not ſatiſfy'd in.

II. Your Second, *It has been ſaid*, which you call our Second *Argument*, runs thus. *That in the Apoſtle's Days there were independent and ſeparate Churches planted in the ſame City.* But ſtill you think it too much to be at the Charge of producing *our Author*, or putting it into *Form of Argument*; without which you do but juggle with us, and miſrepreſent us to the World. How far you intend to ſtretch your *Independency of Churches*, we cannot Divine; or whether by *Independent Churches* you mean Churches, or Congregations only Separate as to *outward Communion* in the ſame City; How then ſhall we form this into an *Argument*, but in your own ambiguous Terms? And then it will Hypothetically look thus,

If there were Independent and ſeparate Churches planted in the Apoſtle's Days, in the ſame City, then are not the Independent and ſeparate Churches now in England *Schiſmatical.*

But there were Independent and Separate Churches planted in the Apoſtle's Days in the ſame City. Erg.

And now that it is brought into this Logical Order for you, we know not who will own it, either

either *Major* or *Minor*. If thoſe that, among us, are call'd *Independents*, will own it, let them Anſwer for themſelves. But, as far as it concers us, we doubt you will have no great Reaſon to triumph in it, by that time we have examin'd it.

The *Conſequence* of the *Major* we deny; becauſe in the Apoſtle's Days, there might be, and we have Reaſon to think there were, but too many Independent and Separate Churches planted in the ſame Cities, by thoſe falſe Teachers, who then crept into the Churches, and drew Diſciples after them, and of whom the Apoſtles often complain'd, *Act.* 20 30. *Jud.* 19. 3. *Joh.* 10. Yet thus your invidious *Charity* repreſents us, that you may, if poſſible, perſwade the World to believe, that we are the Perſons whom the Apoſtles prophecy'd and complain'd of, and whom the Scripture condemns for *Schiſmaticks*, &c.

As for your *Minor*, That there were ſuch *Independent Churches* planted in the Apoſtles Days; if you mean, by ſuch as Schiſmatically Separated themſelves, we will grant it, but if you mean, planted by the Apoſtles themſelves, as your following *Diſcourſe* on it plainly intimates, let them, that think themſelves ſo highly concern'd in it, Diſpute it out, for 'twill be even all one to Us on whether ſide the Victory ſhall fall.

On this Argument yo· have left us little to do, but to expect the Iſſue of the Squabble betwixt

twixt you and your Learned Dr. *Hammond*; who tells you, " That as St. *Peter* was the Apoſtle " of the Circumciſion, and St. *Paul* of the Gen- " tiles; ſo whenſoever theſe Two great Apo- " ſtles came to the ſame City, the one con- " ſtantly apply'd himſelf to the *Jews*, receiv'd " Diſciples of ſuch, form'd them into a Church, " and left them, when he departed that Regi- " on, to be Govern'd by ſome Biſhop of his " own Aſſignation. And the Other in like man- " ner did the ſame to the *Gentiles*. And this is what you endeavour very Learnedly to Re- fute. Sir, We will not preſume to intrude our ſelves as Moderators, between you; how- ever, you may give us leave to gather up ſome of the great Spoyles of the Field, at leaſt a few of the broken Arrows, to warm our ſelves by. Now, that the Apoſtles them- ſelves were free to Communicate, on all Occa- ſions, both with *Jews* and *Gentiles*, is moſt cer- tain, knowing that the *Partitian-Wall* being now broken down, they both made but *One Catho- lick Church* under Chriſt the *Catholick Head*. But it is as certain, that it was long before the *Old Bottles* could hold the *New Wine*, without burſting; Hence it is that there were, for the firſt Age, ſuch Differences and Diſtances be- tween the *Jewiſh* and *Gentile* Converts; that they could endure no Religious Communion with one another. 'Tis true, this Heat aroſe on the *Jew*'s Side, who were ſtill ſo ſuperſtiti- ouſly Zealous for their *Old Ceremonies*; and 'tis a common Obſervation, that the Weaker and more Superſtitious are always the more obſti- nately

nately Hot for the Exteriors of Religion, and more for the Shadow than the Substance of it. But so it was that they would admit no other than a *Jew*, or *Jewish Proselyte* into their Communion, or into any of their Synagogues, at least not into their *Temple*, as appears by *Paul*'s hard Case at *Jerusalem*, *Act.* 21. 20. &c. So that whether or no they were at first Apostolically Constituted, as distinct Churches, under their proper Bishops in one and the same City; this is most evident, that they had their different Forms of Worship and Religious Rites, and distinct Communions and Assemblies, whether under one City or Diocesan Bishop or more. Neither do all these Arguments wherewith the Apostle laboured to defend his *Gentile* Converts against the *Old-Leaven* of the Judaizing Zealots, and to convince the *Jews* of their unchristian Bigottry against the *Simplicity and Liberty* of the Gospel, and to maintain the sacred Bond of Union and Peace among them, prove that they were not of different *Outward Communions*, yea else why should he say *to the Jews, I became as a Jew*, &c. 1 *Cor.* 9. 20. *&c.* But he only endeavours to calm the Heats of their Spirits towards one another, that they should not lay the mighty stress of eternal Salvation on these little Things; but notwithstanding these Differences, which could not be cur'd but by Time, they should receive and embrace one another, as Fellow-Members of one and the same universal mystical Body.

And

And now I will tell you in few words, how far *You* and *We* are concerned in this your Dispute with the Dr.: Either there were Independent and Separate Churches planted by the Apostles in the same City, or there were not, *Utrum horum*, &c. If there were, then,

1. Your Dr. was in the right, and you under a mistake in opposing him.

2. What was done by the Apostles, rules the case under the like circumstances, to Us, and to all other Churches to the World's end.

3. If there were such a Division of *Outward Communion* among the Churches of the Apostle's own planting, and by their Allowance and Order; then the Differences of *Outward Communion* destroy not the *Catholick Union*: But the Church is truly *One* by some surer and more adequate Bond than that of Uniformity of Outward Communion.

On the other side, if all the Churches of the Apostles planting were always *One in Outward Communion*; then were not the Ceremonies in Controversie between the *Jews* and *Gentiles* ever made the *necessary Terms of their Communion*; but every one had his Liberty, according the Sentiments of his own Conscience, and private Judgment, of using or not using them: Because otherwise *Outward Communion* had been utterly impracticable. Now whether of these two you will chuse, is very indifferent to *Us*; because either of them will answer well enough for *Us* in what you here Object against us. And what now is become of your Notion of *Catholick Unity*, let any one

judge that hath but the command of one ſober Thought.

III. The next thing that you are pleas'd to produce in our Names, and call one of our *Arguments*, is this; *That Jeſus Chriſt hath declar'd, that where two or three are gathered together in his Name, he is in the midſt of them: And that we Aſſemble in this manner, and are therefore aſſur'd of his favourable Preſence.* Here alſo Juſtice would have quoted us its *Author*, and *Art* would have lick'd it into *Form* for us; that ſo we might have ſeen the proper Dimenſions and Strength of it as an *Argument*. Now, in Logical Form, we humbly conceive it will look after this faſhion, and ſpeak to this effect.

Thoſe that are gathered together, with Chriſt in the midſt of them, are no Schiſmatical Aſſembly.

But we are gathered together with Chriſt in the midſt of us. Erg.

But becauſe the ſtuff you have here laid together for Us, will not regularly be comprehended within the compaſs of one ordinary Syllogiſm, it will be needful to ſupport the *Minor*, which ſeems to to be moſt in danger, with another to this purpoſe.

Thoſe that are gathered together in the Name of Chriſt, have Chriſt in the midſt of 'em.

But we are gathered together in the Name of Chriſt. Erg.

SIR,

SIR, Though we own the *Scripture* out of which you quote us theſe Words, *Matth.* 18. 20. in the true ſenſe and meaning of them, and bleſs God for the Gracious Promiſe contain'd in them; yet as we never offered them as a Reaſon of our Separation from *your Communion*, ſo neither do we own them as an *Argument* to juſtifie our ſo doing. You herein trifle with us. Had you durſt to have engaged our *Arguments*, you would not have made your ſelf ſport with theſe *little Things*, which are juſtly enough liable to ſo many exceptions. But this, it ſeems, is a *Reed*, which you have borrowed from the *Old Novations* to ſmite *Us* with; and with theſe you ſhould have left, it or ſome others of that Character; and not in imitation of the Old Woman at *Endor*, have raiſed up the Ghoſt of St. *Cyprian* to read us a *Doom*, till you had firſt ſubſtantially proved, that we are the Perſons of whom St. *Cyprian* ſpake. But this indeed is an *Argument* that *you* make light of, and ſo do *we*.

IV. Your Fourth, *It hath been ſaid*, is of the ſame Complexion and Value with the former. The *Poſtulatum* that lies in queſt between us, is, *Whether our Separating from the Church of* England, *in outward Communion, be Schiſm?* And to prove our Innocency herein, you pretend that we produce the words of the Apoſtle *Paul*, *Phil.* 1. 15, and 18. That *Paul* rejoiced that Chriſt was Preached even by thoſe Men that did it out of Envy and Strife; and if the Caſe of our Preachers were as bad as this, as long as they Preach Chriſt, *We* have no reaſon to be

ſollicitous about their *Call*, nor *You* to be offended at their *Work*. This we ſuppoſe you put in to make up the *Half Dozen*: But if you would repreſent it as one of our *Arguments*, you ſhould have ſqueezed it into ſuch a *Syllogiſm* as this, that we might have known what to make on't.

> *If the Preaching of Chriſt, though out of Envy and Strife, were matter of rejoicing to* Paul; *then the Preaching of Chriſt, though out of Envy, and without a Call,* (which you force into the Argument) *is not Schiſmatical.*
>
> *But our Miniſters do Preach Chriſt, whatever their Principles, or their Call to the Office be.* Erg.

We wiſh you would do us the right to tell us, from whom of *Us* you got this *Argument*: Poſſibly, ſome good Body or other, that was not ſo well-pleas'd with your *Rigours* in ſtopping the Mouths of ſo many Hundreds of our Miniſters at once, may have ſaid, That if *Paul* did rejoice that Chriſt was faithfully Preached, though by ſuch as envied his Fame and Liberty in the Goſpel; then you of the Church of *England* have done very unlike to the Bleſſed *Paul*, in ſilencing ſo many of the Able and Faithful Miniſters of Chriſt, who would have Preached him Sincerely and Peaceably, and from a Principle of Love to the Souls of Men; and that had as much a *Call* to Preach as *You* And if you will, as you ought, take it thus, and call it an *Argument*, We will own it as a ſober

ſober *Reaſonning* of the Caſe with you, whoever were the firſt *Author* of it. But when you mock us with the *Man of Straw* of your own ſtuffing, you deal with Us, as they dealt of old with the Chriſtians, whom they put into Bears Skins and Fools Coats, to be laught at by the Mob, and worried by the Beaſts: And ſo you deal with our Miniſters.

1. By repreſenting them to be ſuch as take on them the Work of the Miniſtry, without a *Call* to that Office; the contrary whereof we have already proved.

2. In ſaying that *Paul*'s Enviers Preached to none but the *Infidels*, (which is more than you pretend to prove) intimating, that if you could but get our Miniſters baniſhed into *America*, or any other *Infidel* part of the World, to Preach the Goſpel to them that never yet heard of it; then you will rejoice too, as *Paul* did.

3. In accuſing them of *Envy and Strife*, as the main Principle that ſets them on work to Preach Chriſt here ſo near to your Noſes; wherein you make your ſelf a Judge of evil Thoughts.

4. By your implicit complaint, how much they exerciſe your Patience and Self-denial, as thoſe of old did *Paul*'s. Yet would you but lay aſide your own Envy and Prejudices, you might, on much more comfortable Grounds, conclude, as the Apoſtle there doth, that this their Preaching would be to your Advantage, and Beneficial both to the Church and to your ſelves too.

V. The next Argument that you can afford us, is this; *That we are only returned to thoſe whom we had forſaken before; and that we might do this, ſince we had the Indulgence, or the Liberty granted to us by the Law.*

Before we meddle with this Argument, let us turn it into *Form* after its *Fellows*, and ſee how it will look then, and who they are that will own it. But in Syllogiſm it makes this Figure.

For a People to return to thoſe Miniſters whom they had forſaken before, when they have Liberty granted them by the Law ſo to do, is no Schiſm.

But we have now Liberty granted us to return to thoſe Miniſters whom we had forſaken before. Erg.

Sir, It would look very ingeniouſly, if you would now at laſt pleaſe to tell us, from what *Author* of *Ours* you took this *Topping Argument*, which perhaps you think, and would have others to think, is one of the beſt we have to defend our ſelves with. The truth is, were it not for the *Law* that protects Us, we ſhould be badly able to defend our ſelves againſt Church-violence; and doubtleſs there are Summer-flies enough among Us, whoſe Devotion depends on this *Liberty* which the *Law* hath given us: But had we not better Reaſons to juſtifie our Cauſe againſt your Argumentations, we ſhould think our ſelves in an ill Caſe.

'Tis hardly worth our labour to follow you in all that you harrangue on this *Head.* You ſay,

ſay, *If our Separation was Sinful before we Conform'd, our return to it muſt be Sinful*; And we think ſo too, *For the Law hath not alter'd the Caſe*, as to the Nature of the thing. Wherefore your firſt *Enquiry* upon it is very pertinent, *viz. Whether our Separation before we Conformed were Sinful.* But inſtead of Enquiring, you take it for granted that it was ſo; and ſay, *'tis clear from what went before*, i. e. from your notion of *Catholick Unity*; which we have examin'd, and think that by this time you have little Reaſon to Glory in it. But if this prove to be no *clear* evidence againſt us, then it is not yet *clear* that our Separation from you is *Cauſeleſs*, and therefore *Sinful* and *Schiſmatical.* And we hope we have already ſaid enough to deſtroy that Infant-notion of *Catholick Unity* in your Senſe, if we may but obtain an unbyaſſed Judgment upon it. Neither do we need that Objection you here make for us, *That many of us were never Members of the Church of* England, *and therefore no Deſerters of it.* We commend you that you will be careful to raiſe no Objections, but what you think you can Anſwer. But you muſt firſt better prove that our Separation is *Cauſeleſs*, and then we ſhall think our ſelves concerned to take notice of what you ſay.

Sir, We are aſhamed to hear a *Proteſtant* pleading ſo like a *Papiſt* for a *Prieſtly Succeſſion*; concluding that the Office of the Goſpel-Miniſtry is utterly extinct, without your *Epiſcopal Ordination.* Had not this Antiſcriptural, Uncharitable, Church-deſtroying Pretenſion been ſo long ago baffled, and therefore deſerted by

the Wiſeſt and moſt Learned of your own Communion, as well as by the Judgment of all Foreign Proteſtant Divines, we ſhould not have wondered ſo much at you. Wherefore we ſhall not now *Remtoties actam agere*, but leave you firſt to anſwer what hath been by ſo many, and with ſo convincing Evidence written on this ſubject; whoſe Names we need not mention to one that is ſo well acquainted with Books as you are. In the mean time we cannot but make a very particular Obſervation on the Ebullition of your Gall againſt the *Liberty* we now enjoy by the Benefit of the *Law*: 'tis well for us that this was not granted us (as once) by a *Diſpencing Power*, to which the late Reigns pretended, but by a Better-deſign'd and Well adviſed *Act of King and Parliament*. For to give us here a Taſte of the Volatility of your *Spirit* of *Charity*, you are bold to ſuggeſt, that *We are not the Perſons that come within the intent of that Act, and therefore can juſtly expect no favour from it*; *becauſe* (you ſay) *that Act was only deſign'd to give eaſe to Tender Conſciences, but ours are not of that number*, becauſe not of the ſame Latitude with yours. Oh how do your Fingers itch to be at your old Work with us again? What a grief of Heart is the *Indulgence*, which our Governours have ſo Graciouſly and ſo Neceſſarily granted us? How fain would you cut us off from the Protection of the *Laws*, under which we live as Loyally and Obediently as any of your ſelves? And all becauſe we have forſaken your Ceremonies, and deſire to Worſhip God in a way more agreeable to the Scripture

pture Simplicity of the Goſpel, and more experimentally conducive to the Spiritual Good and Eternal Happineſs of our own Souls. We ſee by this, that *Paul* was never in greater danger at *Jeruſalem* on the account of his *Nonconformity*, than *We* ſhould be of *You* ſhould the Government but once more let you looſe upon *Us*. But that *We* are none of the *Tender Conſciences*, that come within the intent of the *Act*, you pretend to prove, by our former Conforming to you, and Communion with you; wherein you preſume that we were then ſatisfied, and thought it lawful. Ay, Sir, we once thought it lawful (*i. e.* not abſolutely, or in it ſelf Sinful) when we either knew no better, or could get no better; and we are of the ſame Mind ſtill, as we have once already told you, and to which (to avoid repetition) we would referr you; having (for illuſtration of the Caſe) firſt given you this Familiar *Similitude*. There was a time in *Samaria* when an *Aſſe's Head* was ſold for Fourſcore Pieces of Silver, and the fourth part of a Cab of *Dove's Dung* for Five Pieces of Silver: There was nothing ſo Ceremonially or Naturally unclean, but was Hungrily fed upon, and not one queſtioned the Lawfulneſs of it, ſo that there were no Murder in the Caſe: To the Hungry Soul every bitter thing was ſweet. But when the Siege was broken up, and the Gates were opened, and a Plenty of all Good Food was come, ſhould the Princes have Monopoliz'd it, and by a ſevere Edict interdicted the free uſe of it, and confin'd the People to the uſe of ſuch things for kind and meaſure, as they had found in their extremi-

2 Kings 6. 25.

extremity would pass down with them, and was just enough to keep Soul and Body together, and condemn all such to *Fines*, or *Prisons*, or *Banishment*, that should dare, though never so peaceably and temperately, to make use of the Plenty that God had given them; would not your *Charity* think this to be a little hard? And truly, while we think our Souls so much better and nearer to us than our Bodies, we cannot take it very kindly to be so dealt with by *You*.

Lastly, To take your fair leave of this *Argument*, you tell us, that you are far from derogating from the Authority of Secular Princes But we must tell you, that you are not so far as would better become you, from reflecting on the Wisdom and Justice of those that are in Supream Authority over you, and by whose distinguishing Favour it is that you enjoy your *Ecclesiastical Preferments*, and *We our Christian Liberty of Conscience*, and *Immunity* from the rigour of *Penal Laws*.

VI. You have now brought us to what you Call our Sixth *Argument*; and that you may shew how bountiful you can be, and how willing to make the most of what we have to say for our selves, you have subtilly divided this *One* for us into *Three*. The Bulk of the Argument we perceive lies thus.

That the way of the Separation is preferable to that of the Church, i. e. Of the Church of *England*. Erg.

We

We Anſwer, that to chuſe that which is the more excellent, and having now *Liberty* given us ſo to do, we hope is no Schiſm, at leaſt in our Caſe. And to ſuffult our *Major*, you have found out for us Three other *Subſervient Arguments*, which yet you ſay *are cut off, by the Sinfulneſs of our Separation*: So that it ſeems your Goodneſs never intended they ſhould do us any real Service. And thus you could have found it in your Heart to have *diſmiſed them without farther Conſideration.* But becauſe you apprehend there is ſome ſtreſs laid upon 'em, and to make your Triumph the greater, *You thought fit to bring them under a diſtinct Examination*, wherein we ſhall follow you with a very obſequious diligence.

1. *It hath been ſaid, that in the way of Separation we enjoy purer Ordinances; Ordinances that are freer from Ceremony, and the addition of things not commanded, that ſet us at a greater diſtance from Popery*, &c. But to rid your ſelf of this way of Arguing, you endeavour to ſmother it under a Heap of *Abſurdities, which they fall into, who would exclude from Religion all things not commanded; and who make the greateſt diſtance from the Church of* Rome, (from which you ſeem Jealous of being drawn too far) *the Standard of the beſt Reformation.* And then you make us a long Quotation of the groſs Abſurdities of thoſe Men, whom you call the *more Rigid Separatiſts*, out of *Baylie's Diſſwaſive*, and *Paget's Arrow againſt Separation*; wherein we are not concerned, unleſs it be, as you well adviſe, to caution us againſt the like wild Extravagancies.

This

This we take kindly enough from you, and that we may not lye long in your Debt in this kind, we think it as ſeaſonable to deſire you to conſider by what Means and Degrees the Church of *Rome* arriv'd to its ακμη in Superſtition and Idolatry: Whether ſome ſuch few uncommanded Ceremonies, which you ſo zealouſly retain, and unwarrantably impoſe, were not the firſt *Neſt-Eggs*, to which all the reſt were laid: Whether they are not now as productive of more as ever they were, when an occaſion ſhall offer; and whether there are not enough now in *England* that do expect it, and have prepared their *Neſts* for it? Whether your few Ceremonies have not the ſame relation and ſubſervient tendency to the groſſer Superſtition and Idolatries of *Rome*, as the *High Places* of the *Jews*, which ſome of their Reforming Kings, through the inſtigation of their *Prieſts* were ſo loth to let go, were of the groſſer *Idolatries* of the *Heathen?* And whether you are not as much concerned to beware of leading your ſelves and others into the Gulph of the fouleſt Superſtition by an *abuſe* of your *Power*, as we have to beware that others run not out into Extreams by *our* doing but our *Duty*.

You ſeem to grant us, with the generality of your Conformiſts, *That there is nothing to be admitted as an Eſſential part of God's Worſhip, that is not the ſubject of a Divine Precept:* But would you not then by an *innuendo*, have us to believe, that ſome *Integral Parts* may be admitted without any ſuch Precept? Which you had need to prove, before we can be very for-

forward to believe. But then you say indefinitely, *That External Rites and Circumstances of Worship* (whether *English*, or *Romish*, *Jewish*, *Greek*, or *Barbarian*,) *are of another Nature*; and indeed we think so too, *but being not forbidden of God, expressly, or by consequence, are not Sinful.* And herein we should agree too, could it but be once agreed, what is by consequence forbidden. For our parts, we are apt to think that the consequence of those first words of the *Second Commandment*, and all those Scriptures of the *Old Testament*, that condemn the using of any thing in *God's Worship*, which *He* hath not commanded or required: That that of *Matth.* 15. 9. and that of the *Apostle*, *Colos.* 2. 20, 21, 22. will go far to condemn all those Rites and Ceremonies us'd in Divine Worship which are of Men's Invention, and not necessary *ex natura rei*, whatever their pretended usefulness on the account of their significancy be. Besides, for the aggravation of our Guilt, and our fuller Conviction, you would have us to *consider how few of these are required of us as Private Men.* To which we reply, that this brings to our Minds, how *Lot* on a better Principle, and to better Purpose, once pleaded for *Zoar*, *Is it not a little one?* But whether there be few or many, we know no Power *you* have to require, nor any warrant *we* have to admit of any; for he that may require *one*, may, on your Principles, require *ad libitum*, as many as he will. But that it should be impossible to preserve Peace and Order in the Church without a Con-

Conformity to these things, is owing only to the disorder of your own Spleens, and your pertinacious Zeal for them. Would you but give every one his Liberty in these things which your selves call *indifferent*, according to the Apostle's Rule, *Rom.* 14. *& alibi*, we know not who would disturb the Churches Peace about them.

You say, *That in the Primitive Church, as many Ceremonies were used, as now are required by the Church of England*; and what if we grant that there were as many, and more; will you argue from the Primitive Churches using to your Churches requiring and imposing? Or do you know which way to prove that their *Effects of Charity*, or *Kiss of Peace*, or the *Woman's Vail*, were of the Apostles Appointment or Institution? 'Tis true, the Apostle argues the Decency of the *Woman's being cover'd*, and of the *Man's being uncover'd* in the Place and Time of God's solemn Worship, 1 *Cor.* 11. But as for the Matter or Mode of the Covering, he hath left this to every one's *Liberty*, for any thing we have yet heard of; and this being a Matter of natural Decency, as he there argues at, *Ver.* 14. 15. we take it for our *Duty* to observe; as one of our Ministers in an *Essay on that Subject* hath, not long ago, taught us. But the Inference you drew from this had need of a little better proof. Viz. *That if the Church hath Power to lay aside such Rites*, (for you confess they are Alterable, tho' yours be like the *Laws of the Medes and Persians*) *so it hath Power also to appoint others of the like Nature, and is oblig'd to do so, upon Emergent Occcasions, as the Prudence*

(i.e.

(i. e. as the good Pleaſure of your Biſhops) *may direct*. But for our parts, we cannot think that your Conſequence is good, *Viz.* That becauſe the Church hath Power to Purge it ſelf of ſome unneceſſary and offenſive Vanities, therefore it hath Power to Introduce others, much leſs that it is oblig'd ſo to do. For we cannot believe that becauſe *Hezekiah* had Power to take down the *Brazen Serpent*, and to caſt it away as a *Nehuſhtan*, which had been a Symbol of God's own Appointment, and of ſo long ſtanding, that therefore he had Power, or was under any Obligation to erect another *Gambol* of his own Invention, to ſtand in the Room of it.

1. Then, we will ſay with you, *It is certain that the publick Worſhip of God ought to be Celebrated with ſuch Ceremonies as are ſuitable to the Dignity and Solemnity of the Work, and agreeable to the general Directions of the Holy Scripture*, and (you might have added) to the *Purity and Simplicity of the Goſpel*, and which are *Neceſſary* to the right Performance of the Work.

2. *That Ceremonies us'd in Divine Worſhip ought to be Significant of ſome Spiritual Grace, or Expreſſive of ſome Chriſtian Duty*, is certain; becauſe elſe they are but *Herb John*, Uſeleſs and Impertinent, which would but Affront the Deity we pretend to Worſhip. And ſo indeed we find, that all the Ceremonies of Chriſt's Inſtitutions were Symbolical and Expreſſive; but to argue, that becauſe Chriſt did inſtitute *ſymbolical Ceremonies* in his Church, therefore you may do ſo too, is what you may not expect our Aſſent to, till you have prov'd *your* Power in and over the Church to be equal to that of *Chriſt*, or ſhew

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us the *Patent* he hath given you to juſtifie your ſo doing. The little Inſtances which you produce, of *Smiting the Breaſt*, *Lifting up the Hands*, in Prayer, *Kneeling* on the ſame Occaſion, and the putting on ſome *new Garment* at the time of *Baptiſm*, have been indeed things taken up into common Uſe as naturally Expreſſive of ſome inward Devotion, or Affection of the Heart, or of outward Decency, and almoſt common to all Mankind; and when you ſhall have diſcover'd and prov'd any *Divine Inſtitution* of them, we will acknowledge our Sin, if at any time we diſuſe them on ſuch Occaſions; but to Argue from the Antiquity of their Uſe, to the Churches impoſing Power, is as Orthodox and Valid in *England*, as it is in *Rome* or *Spain*, or any other Church, true or falſe, in the whole World.

3. *That the H. Scripture directs us in general, to do all things Decently, and in Order*, we do as zealouſly own as you. But then, why ſhould not that of the H. Scripture, from which we take our Rules of Goſpel-worſhip, determine to us what is Decent and Orderly? Or, if by the Old Teſtament you would juſtifie your *Ephod*, and *Organs*, and *Feſtivals*, and *Ceremonious Conſecrations*, or any thing elſe that the *Chriſtian* hath borrowed from the *Jewiſh Church*, why do you pick and chuſe, and follow your Rule at halves? Are not the *Harp*, and the *Trumpet*, and the *Viol* and *Cymbol*, *the Holy Oil*, and all the reſt of the *Prieſtly Robes*, and *Utenſils* of the Divine Service, which you have left out, altogether as Decent and as Significant, as what you have taken from thence, or have been borrowed

rowed from any others, and which have as much to ſhew of a Divine Inſtitution?

4. Your next Paragraph looks more like *Banter* than *Argument*; for you tell us, in Effect, *that we ought to ſatisfie our ſelves with* an implicit Faith *of the Lawfulneſs of the Ceremonies impos'd on us, and of their Conformity to the End for which they are appointed, becauſe it is not Neceſſary that every one that uſes them ſhould know the Reaſonableneſs of their Inſtitution*; ſo that we ought to make no Queſtion of the Lawfulneſs of what you require of us, even in the High and Important Concern of God's Worſhip, and our own Salvation, how Unreaſonable ſoever it appears to us; and are we not like to be edefi'd much by what we don't underſtand? Is this one Article of your Faith too, *That Ignorance is the Mother of Devotion?* Muſt we put out our own Eyes, and make no Queſtion for Conſcience ſake either of the Lawfulneſs or Reaſonableneſs of what you require of us, but follow the Conduct of your Cuſtoms, believing, as the Church believes? Is this λογικὴ λατρεία the *Reaſonable Service* that God now requires of the Goſpel-worſhipper? And is this ſome of your Proteſtant Doctrine? But to ſatisfie our Conſciences herein, you Inſtance in the cuſtomary Way of *taking an Oath by kiſſing the Book*, *which*, you ſay, *may ſafely be done by ſuch as know nothing of the Original of that Ceremony, nor are ſatisfi'd of the Fitneſs of it*; what, nor of the Lawfulneſs of it; nor whether the Common-Prayer be in the Book or no? If Cuſtom will ſerve for a Rule in *Civil* Matters, muſt it be ſo in the higheſt and moſt ſacred *Acts* of our *Religion* too?

5. And this now brings you home to your main Topick *Cuſtom*; from which you profeſs to take *the Significancy of your Ceremonies, and the Meaſures of Decency, as that which gives Rules both for Words, and Actions, and Habits, and Geſtures.* 'Tis true, *Cuſtom* hath a great ſtroak to conciliate a Decency and Significancy to theſe things, and may ſerve very much to excuſe the Uſe of them in Civil Converſation; and to offer any thing to the holy God in Worſhip, which *Civil Cuſtom* hath made Undecent or Ridiculous, is horribly Prophane. But will you hence argue, that what *Cuſtom* hath made Decent in Civil Converſation, is therefore ſo in Religious Worſhip, and fit to be impos'd as a Condition of Chriſtian Communion? Or that what Religious Cuſtom hath made Decent and Significant in the Opinion of the Superſtitious and Idolaters, is therefore lawful to be us'd and impos'd by you? Tho' the Apoſtle pleaded from the *Cuſtome* of the Churches, for what he call'd on the *Corinthians* for, 1 *Cor.* 11. 16. yet this was but *one* of his Arguments, and which, if you obſerve, he urges only *negatively*; he doth not plead for it, becauſe it was a *Cuſtom*, but pleads againſt their contrary Practice, becauſe they had no ſuch *Cuſtom.* And pray which of thoſe Ceremonies which you contend for, and make the indiſpenſible Condition of Communion with you; might not the Apoſtle have ſaid, we have no ſuch *Cuſtom?* So that this *Argument* recoils upon you, and flies very ſorely in your own face.

6. Your next Paragraph tells us what you have to ſay for the *Sign of the Croſs*, which you

you uſe in *Baptiſm*, for which you cannot pretend to any Apoſtolical Inſtitution, but an Old and General *Cuſtom*; you fancy it to be almoſt as Old as the Apoſtle's, or not above an Age ſhort of them. 'Tis true, the Image of the Croſs crept very early into the Church: He that ſows the *Tares* is not wont to be long behind him that ſows the *Good Seed* in the Field. But we hope you will not ſay that the Earlineſs of a thing is enough to juſtifie it: And that it was very commonly (though we cannot ſay univerſally) uſed as an *Enſign* among the Chriſtians, and as a *viſible Badge* of their Chriſtianity, eſpecially before the *Heathen*, who were wont to upbraid them with their *Crucified God*, we will grant; neither will we uncharitably cenſure the *Zealous* Principles, or Prudential Reaſons on which it was at firſt taken up by ſuch as foreſaw not the *ill uſe* that would in After Ages be made of it. However though it were taken up in thoſe Days as a Teſtimony againſt the *Infidel* World, and in token that they were not aſhamed of their once *Crucified* LORD, and uſed by them not as any part of their Worſhip, but only for diſtinction ſake between *Them* and *Heathens*; yet this is but a precarious kind of Apologizing for the *uſing*, much leſs for the *impoſing* of it now, when there is not, *per ratio*, the ſame reaſon for it; eſpecially after it hath been ſo generally and ſo long as idolatrouſly abuſed by ſuch as have prevented the firſt Deſign of it, as ever *Gideon*'s *Ephod*, or the *Brazen Serpent* were abus'd. Nor doth it yet appear how our Proteſtant Reformers have, or ever can free it from the Pol-

lution of those Abuses whereby the Superstitions and Idolatries of Men have defil'd it by putting it into your *Liturgy*, and making it a significant Sign, and imposing it on us as an *Integral Part* of the Sacrament of *Baptism*, without which that Sacrament is not to be esteemed Perfect; and all this without any intimation of instruction or warrant from him who instituted and left this Sacrament intire with his Churches. Baptism, as our Saviour himself instituted it, is but one Symbolical Sign, but you by adding to it another of your own devising, have made it *Two*; which to us appears like the setting of your *Threshold* by God's *Threshold*, and your *Post* by God's *Post*. Neither will the great Names in which you boast of the Saints and Martyrs now with God, who in the Days of their Flesh walked with God, and Worshipped according to their present Circumstances, and the Light they had then attain'd to, justifie your practice in this more than in any other thing, which is now acknowledged to be the imperfection of these more early and unexperienced Times.

7. You can't yet have done with your beloved thing *Custom*, it being that on which the Life of your Cause doth depend. From *Custom* you take your measures of *Decency* or *Indecency* in all things that you are pleased to call *indifferent*, that is, all those things that may be by the Wit of Man superadded as Accidental, or Integral Parts (for only the Essential Parts are by you excepted) of God's Worship. And whether this Position do not open a wide Door to all the Superstitions in the World, and justifie all that hath ever

ever been done of this kind in the moſt degenerate Churches, let any but a Bigot judge.

8. But now you begin to be more Orthodox, when you tell us, *That things which according to Cuſtom are Signs of irreverence amongſt Men, are Marks of Prophaneneſs and Contempt when they are uſed towards the Almighty:* Tho' here you might have remembred to have made an exception of ſome few things; but in general what *Cuſtom* repreſents as Undecent or Rude in Civil Converſation, deſerves a worſe Name in Religious Worſhip. If we rudely ruſh into God's Preſence without an awful ſenſe of his Majeſty upon our Hearts, and ſuch an outward Behaviour of Body, as either *Nature* or *Cuſtom* hath made expreſſive of our inward Fear and Reverence, (though without any of thoſe quaint Ceremonies which are of Humane Inſtitution) we may indeed juſtly fear the due puniſhment of ſuch Irreverence.

And now, Sir, if you lay all theſe things together, as you adviſe us to do, you may find that what you call the *Reverence* and *Decency* of your *Services* is indeed their *Defilement*; that in what you call your *Laudable Cuſtoms*, you act againſt the Scripture *Rules of Spiritual Worſhip and Goſpel Simplicity*, and have deſerted the way in which Chriſt and his Apoſtles walked, and deal with us in that Tyrannical manner which the Holy Scripture condemns. As for outward Bodily Worſhip, we own and practice as zealouſly as you, though not in your Formal Ceremonious way, which ſeems to be more *Artificial* than *Natural*, and ſo nearer of kin to *Graven Images*. You are

for ſetting forth your *Publick Services* with Pomp and Art; we are for what is more Plain and Rational, and naturally Expreſſive of the hidden Man of the Heart, and therein more Agreeable to the Tenour of the Goſpel. We are careful to avoid whatever Nature, Scripture or Cuſtom hath made a Mark of Irreverence in the Worſhip of our God; but we know no Authority we or any others have to preſcribe particular poſitive Laws in theſe things to others. *Kneeling* in Prayer we own as a Geſture which both Nature and Scripture directs to, and ſo we practice; though not from a Conſcience of its abſolute neceſſity, either in our own *Private Houſes*, or in the *Publick*, becauſe God hath allowed us a Liberty in it, and all the Saints before us have uſed the ſame Liberty; nor do we underſtand why you ſhould ſo ſtrictly require it of us in *Publick* rather than in *Private*, (which your ſelves do not obſerve in every Prayer you put up to God there) unleſs it be from a conceit you have that the *Publick Houſe* is more Holy than the *Private*; which is a Notion too *Jewiſh* for us to entertain.

To conclude this Head, *omitting*, as you ſay, *ſome other Particulars in debate between us*; which perhaps you are not willing to undertake the Defence of; you think you have one thing that will *demonſtrate to us the weakneſs of our Exceptions againſt the Ceremonies of the Church, and ſhew us the Irreverence that is uſed in our Meetings.* And what you mean is the *Lord's Supper, which in our way is appointed to be received ſitting.* Now againſt this you begin to demonſtrate very gravely thus

thus, *Is there any Precept for this in Scripture? Or if none can be found, is it not againſt the Second Commandment? Is it not an Idol?* This you offer us *Ironically*, but we reply to you in *Earneſt*, that we find that in Scripture, which warrants our *Sitting* at this Sacrament; but never a word of *Kneeling* by Precept or Precedent of Chriſt or his Apoſtles, in all the New Teſtament, nor in the Practice of the Churches, while they retained their Primitive Purity; therefore you are as much concerned in the *Second Commandment* on this account as we. You tell us *for certain that this Matter is not decided in Scripture:* But why is it not there decided? Becauſe it is not expreſly required or forbidden; and where the Scripture is not very punctually expreſs, there, no doubt, Men may deviſe, and do, and impoſe what they liſt, without any regard to Scripture Conſequences. But yet you find that it is not for your Intereſt alway to uſe this way of Arguing. The Practical Precedents and Examples of Chriſt or his Apoſtles, which you find in Scripture, will ſometimes amount with you to the force of a Precept, when you apprehend it will fall on the ſide of your *Beloved Ceremonies*? Nay, you can plead very ſtiffly the Authority of an *Old Cuſtom* of the Churches which hath been taken up, and perhaps ſuperſtitiouſly enough, long after the Apoſtle's Days: But now it ſeems there is nothing to be taken for certain that hath not a plain Scripture command, wherein we think you are not ſo well aware at what an uncertainty you have left the Cauſe you have now undertaken.

Though you cannot be ignorant of what hath been already ſaid by ſo many of the Learned of our Way in the Vindication of our Practice herein; yet let us once more ſee if we may not find much more in the Holy Scripture for *Sitting*, at this Sacrament, than for *Kneeling*.

Now it is certain, that this Sacrament, as to the Externals of it, is but a *Ceremony*, tho' of the moſt *Sacred Inſtitution* and Higheſt Importance, both a *Signifying* and a *Sealing Ceremony*; and he that inſtituted it, did beſt underſtand the Nature and Ends of it, and what Geſture and Circumſtances would beſt become the Celebration of it: And his own Example herein, we think is ſufficient to warrant, if not to require, our Imitation. But when we look back to the Inſtitution, we find that Chriſt *ſate down with the Twelve, and Eat the Paſſover with them.* Here the Geſture was expreſſed, and 'twas *Sitting*, not *Kneeling*; *Matth.* 26. 20. *And as they were Eating*, without changing the Geſture, he Inſtituted and Celebrated this Goſpel Ordinance, and Adminiſter'd it to them with his own Hand, *verſe* 26, 27, 28. *Mark* tells us, *as they* Sate *and did Eat*, *Mark* 14. 18. *i. e.* the *Paſſover*, and in the ſame Poſture ſtill. *As they did Eat*, *Jeſus took Bread and Bleſſed it*, *ver.* 22. *Luke* alſo tells us, *That he* Sate *down, and the Twelve Apoſtles with him*, *Luke* 22. 14. and in that Poſture Adminiſtred his *Laſt Supper* to them, *verſe* 17, 18, 19, 20. Theſe are the only three *Evangeliſts* that particularly mention the manner of our Saviour's Adminiſtring this Ordinance; and they all ſpeak expreſly of their

Sitting

Sitting, but never a word of *Kneeling* in either of them. Thus Chriſt and his Diſciples did Eat it together as they were wont to Eat the *Paſſover* which was the very ſame Ordinance, of the ſame Divine Inſtitution, Signification and Myſtery, and equally Sacred, though of a different Form, as this of the Goſpel is. And will you now ſay, that this was irreverently done? That it had too much of Familiarity, and two little of Decency or Humility? Dare you thus Blaſpheme the Wiſdom of your Saviour? Did not he underſtand the End, and the proper Signification of his *Own Myſtery*, as well as you? Hath he told you again and again, that he and his Diſciples did Eat it *Sitting*, and will you tell him that it ought to have been done *Kneeling*? May he not then demand of you who made you his Counſellors, or his Correctors? And who hath required this *voluntary Humility* and *Will-worſhip* of you? But you tell us that there is a Prayer with which you deliver the Elements to the People, and therefore it ought to be received in a Praying Poſture. A Prayer, *viz*. *The Body and Blood of Chriſt preſerve thy Body and Soul unto Eternal Life*. To which we anſwer,

1. This which you call a *Prayer*, ſounds more like a *Prieſtly Benediction*, or kind of *Exorciſm*, being repeated over and over to every individual Communicant; ſo that the *Kneeling* ſeems to be requir'd rather in Honour of the *Office*, as in Confirmation and Abſolution, than in reſpect of what you call a *Prayer*.

2. Who

2. Who made this Form of Words for you? Or required it of you? Is there any mention of this, or of any thing like it, in the Inſtitution? Though we grant that the Heart ought to be full of Holy Ejaculations, Vows and Self-reſignation in ſo Sacred an Action, and which may be done every way as Decently and Reverently *Sitting* or *Standing*, as *Kneeling*, and wherein every one ought to have his own Liberty and Freedom of thought, in the Exerciſe of all Graces, according as they find particular occaſion in and from themſelves; and wherein the Miniſter from the Experiences of his own Heart, may piouſly and profitably ſuggeſt to their aſſiſtance in it; and this reaſonable Service we reject not.

3. Why do not *You* Adminiſter on your *Knees?* For if it be a *Prayer*, 'tis you that properly *Pray*, and the People ſay *Amen.* Doth not your requiring it of others condemn your ſelves? Why muſt you Pray *Standing*, and they *Kneeling?*

4. Though *Kneeling* be an ordinary Praying Poſture, yet if you will excuſe your ſelves, you muſt grant that it is not indiſpenſibly neceſſary. The Apoſtle bids you *Pray* ἀδιαλείπτως continually, or *without ceaſing*; but ſhould you be bound to *Kneel* continually, we doubt that would not be very pleaſing. Judge now whether your Practice herein be not irregular, to ſay no worſe of it.

What the Reaſons were of our LORD's Inſtituting this Sacrament with a Table-Geſture, and of what it is ſignificant, we will not now en-

enquire: 'Tis enough for us that we know his Will in it by his Practice. But you know that we have ſomething elſe to Object againſt *Kneeling* in the Act of Receiving. This Geſture is now become ſcandalous, at leaſt to ſome, becauſe it Symbolizes with the Idolatry of the Church of *Rome* in Worſhipping the *Hoſt*; and by whom, as ſome ſay, it was introduc'd and impos'd to ſupport their Bloody Doctrine of the *Real Preſence*, or, as others think, that *this* was the occaſion of that Idolatry; ſo that here is an unexcuſable appearance of Evil in it; and therefore having no Command of God for it, nor Apoſtolical Example, we ought not to continue its uſe, much leſs to endure the impoſition of it, as if it were of neceſſity. Neither is your Churches declaring againſt the Idolatrous uſe of it, enough to purge or to defend it, unleſs it were a matter of particular Divine Inſtitution. As for thoſe that think it their *Duty* or their *Liberty* ſo to expreſs their Reverence to Almighty God in this Sacrament, with a juſt Abhorrence of all Idolatrous thoughts or pretenſions, we do not judge them; but to do it as of neceſſity, we take to be a piece of Superſtition, and a weakneſs to be pitied.

II. The Second Branch of the laſt Argument you can afford us is this, *That the way of the Separation affords us Communion with a better People than thoſe which we have deſerted.*

'Tis eaſily diſcerned from what ſort of Diſſenters you have rak'd up this Argument, to caſt

caſt it, without diſtinction, in our Faces. But we are not the Perſons ſo much concern'd in it as you would repreſent us to be. However we will not diſmiſs it without giving a ſhort touch of our thoughts upon it, in what you fancy that you have ſpoken very much to your own purpoſe, and altogether as pertinent to our Caſe.

But firſt we will premiſe, that neither *You* nor *We* have any great Reaſon to boaſt of our Goodneſs; it would better become us to lament every one his own Faults, than to ſay to one another, *Stand by thy Self, come not near to me, for I am Holier than thou.* That there is Wheat as well as Tares with *You*, and Tares as well Wheat as with *Us*, we readily grant; though your Charity condemns us all for Tares, and ſuch as are fit to be burnt; and that not for any Hereſie in Judgment, or Immorality in Practice, or Idolatry in Worſhip, but becauſe we dare not bring our Conſciences under the Yoke of your needleſs Ceremonies. We do not pretend to be Churches without a Mixture of Good and Bad, nor do we hope for any ſuch in this World. Yet we muſt ſay, the more the neceſſary Diſcipline is neglected, and Prophaneneſs tolerated, yea, encourag'd by the Examples of ſo many of *your Clergy*; and the moſt *Ignorant* and *Scandalous ones*, not only admitted, but preſs'd to come to the LORD's Table with you, we can have the leſs comfort to join with you in theſe moſt Sacred Myſteries of our Religion. But yet ſhould we grant that all this were too little of it ſelf, to juſtifie our Separation, we cannot think that what you offer

us

us from Scripture on this Head, doth at all affect our Case.

'Tis true, in the Church of *Corinth* there were Corruptions, Disorders, some foul Immoralities, and neglect of Discipline; and yet the Apostle doth not advise them to purge themselves by a *Separation*, but endeavours to reduce them to the Holy *Rules* of their *Institution*, both in Worship, Discipline and Manners: And being a Church of his own Planting, his Authority was prevalent there. what need then of Separation, when Reformation could be obtain'd without it? But, O that this were our Case! Where is the Apostle now that shall judge between us, and Authoritatively decide our Matters for us? To whom shall we go with our Complaints, when those that call themselves the Apostle's Successors will not hear our Complaints, nor hearken to the Apostle's Words, nor walk by the Apostle's Rules, nor regard our Remonstrances and Petitions? If the Foundations be removed, what can the Righteous do? If those that should head the way will not go before us, must we not go alone? Had the Rulers of the Church of *Corinth* refus'd to obey the Apostle's Orders, and insisted on their own Authority, and the Purity of their way, as needing no Reformation, would not the Apostle have advised to *Separate* from these Men? Though Separation be never in it self desirable, yet it is sometimes necessary. And as for all the ill consequences of Separation which you have mentioned with their Aggravations here, we will concurr with you, when once

once you have prov'd our Separation to be *Cauſeleſs* or *Unneceſſary*. But till then, we are not the Perſons concern'd, but by your own Rule, are bound in Conſcience to Separate from thoſe, with whom we cannot hold Communion without Sin.

III. And now we are come to your Third and Laſt. *It hath been ſaid, That the way of the Separatiſts conduces more to our Edification: And that if we would provide what is beſt for our Bodies, we ought more eſpecially to do ſo for our Souls. That we are more Edified by the* Diſſenting Miniſters, *than by the* Conforming Clergy; *and think it requiſite to be Hearers of thoſe, by whom we profit moſt.*

This *Argument*, you ſay, is *Popular*, and therefore the more Dangerous; wherefore you have (according to your Art) beſtowed it the more *diſtinctly* under theſe Four Heads of *Enquiry*.

I. You *Enquire, what is the true* (i. e. your *new*) *Notion of Edification*; and on very ſtrict enquiry, you ſay that you have found, that *Edifying, as applied to Spiritual Matters, ſignifies the Advancement of Perſons in ſome Spiritual Good; and to Edifie them is to do that Work of Charity, whereby we become beneficial to their Souls.* And thus far we think you are right as to the Active and Tranſitive Signification of it: But would you have us to believe that Edification is a thing that hath

hath relation only to others, and not to our ſelves? And for this you cite us, 1 *Cor.* 8. 1. Charity Edifieth, and ſeveral other Scriptures where you find this word mentioned. Whence you conclude, *That 'tis the Edifying of our Neighbours that is required of us, and that of our ſelves is never enjoyn'd under this Expreſſion, nor can it well be ſought, but in conjunction with the Publick Good.*

Sir, Whether the care we ought to have of our own Souls be injoin'd us under this Expreſſion or no, if the thing we intend by it be enjoin'd, what you have hitherto ſaid of it, is but *Logomachy*. For we hope your Charity would not go about to perſwade us, that if we endeavour to Edifie others, 'tis no matter what becomes of our own Souls: And we have reaſon to think that where the Edifying of others is required, the Edifying of our ſelves is neceſſarily imply'd in it, and to be concluded from it *a Majori*. *Thou therefore which Teacheſt another, teacheſt thou not thy ſelf?* Rom. 2. 21. *Leſt when I have preached to others, I my ſelf ſhould be a caſt-away*, 1 Cor. 9. 27. Should not our own Souls be as dear to us, and as much the ſubject of our care, as the Souls of others? Would you make us the *Keepers* of your *Vine-yards* to the fatal neglect of our own, as the *Spouſe* once complain'd, *Cant.* 1. 6. Beſides, 'tis a Soleciſm in Nature for the Liver to prepare good Blood for the nouriſhment of all the other parts of the Body, beſides its own proper *Parenchyma*; and is not the Parallel as great a Soleciſm in Divinity?

Sir,

Sir, If this be your *Spirit of Charity*, and your way of Edifying, you may recommend it to those of your own Tribe, that can Preach Faith and Repentance, Charity, Humility, Sobriety, Continency and Mortification to others, but not to themselves; too well like those of whom Christ spake, *Matth.* 23. 4.

But by your Learning you have discover'd, that *Edifying* signifies *Building*, and *Building* hath relation to a *House*; and you observe that Houses do not build themselves, but must be built by others; and this House, you say (as the word is here to be taken) is the *Church*; for which you quote us two pertinent Scriptures, in which the Apostle speaks of *Edifying of the Church*: But can you inform us why it is not as proper, and as necessary for *Temples* to be *Edified* as *Churches*, and whether every individual believer be not call'd the *Temple of the Holy Ghost*, 1 *Cor.* 6. 19. Nay, do you not grant us in other words, as much as we crave, when you say that the *Polishing and Perfecting those Living Stones, of which the Church is Built, is the Edifying of it*; yea, and thus the Church is said to *Edifie it self*, *Eph.* 4. 16. Well then, if *Edifying* be the Word that doth offend you, pray strike it out of our Argument, and put in *Polishing and Perfecting*, and it will please us all as well. And thus we will conclude with you, *That if we bring new Proselites into the Church* (i. e. by sound conversion to God, and not to a Party, to the Church of Christ, and not meerly to the

the Ceremonies, and Peculiar External Rites, or Forms of this or that Particular Church) *and confirm thoſe that are in it, in advancing any in Knowledge and Piety in Faith and Practice, we ſhall be reckon'd amongſt the Builder or Edifiers of the Church.*

And farther to explain what you mean by Edification, you tell us, there are theſe two things requir'd in it, *viz. Unity* and *Order.*

1. *Unity:* And here you deſcant on the Benefits of *Union*, and the Miſchiefs of *Schiſm*, in the words of *Clemens Romanus*, and Mr. *Baxter*; wherein we would not contradict you, would you but once better prove that this Union muſt conſiſt in thoſe controverted things which you impoſe on us, as the indiſpenſible Condition of our Communion with you. *We* are as deſirous of Church-Union as *You*, and are ſenſible how much it would conduce both to the Ornament, Eſtabliſhment and Enlargement of the Church; but if it be your Tyrannical Impoſitions, and your delivering up the Care of our Souls to ſuch as have no Care of *Ours*, nor of their *Own*, that hath made and doth keep open the Breach between us, let the World Judge who are the *Schiſmaticks.*

2. As for *Order*, you tell us not what you mean, more than what we can pick out of *Eph.* 2. 21. and *Ch.* 4. 16. which Scriptures we own, but can't learn from any thing that is Written there, that our Diſſent from ſuch Impoſitions

as yours, and refuſing to do what you would have us to do, is a breach of *Order*. If we ſtand not in thoſe *Ranks* and *Files* of *Military Order* as once we ſtood; if you ſee our *Seats* forſaken in your *Churches*, and at your *Communion-Tables*, you muſt blame your ſelves as the only Cauſes of this Diſorder.

II. You next *Enquire*, *What we underſtand by Edification, and whether we rightly judge how it is beſt promoted.* And here, we are alſo concern'd to *Enquire*, how rightly we are judg'd by you when you ſay, *That we take that to be Edifying, that raiſes in us ſome Senſible Devotions, that excites in us ſome Religious Affections, ſuch as Love, Joy, Fear, or the like: And theſe, you ſuppoſe, we have chiefly in view, when we preferr the Service in our Meetings before that of the Churches.* The truth is, that which is not proper to raiſe our Devotion in Religious Duties, and to excite Holy Affections in us, we cannot think to be very *Edifying*. We know not how (in this our compound ſtate) to exerciſe the Spiritual Graces of *Faith*, *Repentance*, *Love*, *Fear*, *Humility*, *Joy*, *Delight in God*, &c. but by the help of thoſe Rational and Intellectual Faculties of Underſtanding, Will and Affections, which God hath given us. If you underſtand the more Raptural Myſteries of *Quietiſm*, a more *Stoical* or *Seraphick* way of contemplation, without concerning thoſe Groſſer Spirits in ſo Divine an Exerciſe, we will not envy your Attainment; but for our parts, we can't be ſatiſ-

ſatisfied that our Hearts are concern'd in Religious Duties, as they ought to be, unleſs we are ſenſible that they are ſo.

But to come to Particulars, you inſtance in the two great ordinances of *Praying* and *Preaching*.

1. You begin with the way of *Praying* us'd in our Meetings; and here again you make your ſelf a *Judge of Evil Thoughts*; and that in ſuch a Caſe, wherein you are in Danger of Blaſpheming the Holy Spirit of God. For if it be by the Spirit of Supplication, which makeh Interceſſion in the Saints, that we are taught both what and how to Pray; it concerns you to take heed how you approbiouſly oppoſe your Cant againſt our Common Experience of its aſſiſtance herein. The Old and Often-repeated Harrangue by which you and others of your Way endeavour to exalt your preſcribed *Forms of Prayer*, and which hath been ſo often anſwered to ſilence, doth but bewray your Inexperience of that way of Praying, which the Holy Scriptures direct to, and in which all the Saints in all Ages have found their greateſt Reliefs. How impertinently do you tell us, *That we are not to think that God is at all wrought upon by the variation of Phraſes, or the modulation of them.* No, Sir, we don't imagine that God is mov'd with Words or Tones, or the moſt Eloquent or Artificial Compoſures of Matter or Expreſſion whether Preſcrib'd-

or Unpremeditated; Words are for our own ſakes, not for His; yet we have great reaſon to think, that the better the Affections are exerciſed, and the Graces of the Spirit of God in the Heart, the better is the Heart prepared, and the better grounds it hath to hope to obtain Mercy from him. And certainly, that way of Praying which we find moſt conducible to this end, we have reaſon to preferr: Nor can any thing that we have ever yet heard incline us to your contrary Opinion.

That the *Gift of Prayer*, which is in it ſelf but a Common *Gift*, as that of *Preaching*, &c. is, may be, and too often hath been abuſed by ill Men, is what we grant: But to cenſure all for ill Men that uſe it, is unbecoming a Chriſtian; and to argue from the Abuſe, againſt the Uſe, is too Weak and Abſurd for a Man of your Figure and Learning. And may we not eaſily retort as many and as great Abuſes of your Way of Praying by Limited and Preſcribed Forms, had we a Mind to retaliate? Thoſe Motions and Efforts of Devotion, which without due Caution or Diſtinction you impute to *Natural Cauſes*, *as*, you ſay, *a little Philoſophy would teach us*, *in ſuch as uſe the Gift of Prayer*, are cenſured by you but one degree ſhort of what the Spirit of God in our Saviour Chriſt, was cenſured by thoſe that attributed the *Power* by which he wrought his Miracles, to a *Diabolical Cauſe*, Matth. 12. 24, *&c.* which you

you will do well to read, and ſpend ſome *Second Thoughts* upon.

But to moderare the matter, you are pleaſed to grant, that the *Gift of Elocution* (which you ſeem to take for the whole of the *Gift of Prayer*) may, *upon occaſion, be of Benefit to others:* But if it chance to touch your *Noli me tangere*, and ſeem, though but by conſequence, to reflect on the Honour of your *Liturgy*, and the Forms by which you Pray, that's enough, without any other Fault, to render them moſt *Dangerous Snares*; *and inſtead of promoting, cannot but hinder their Edification.* And this indeed is *Canonical* enough.

For *your part*, you ſay, *you think a well-compos'd Liturgy has much the Advantage of our Way of Praying, and is much fitter in Publick Aſſemblies*; then we hope you will bear with us in our Private Families; where, we thank God, you cannot yet reach us. And for this your Opinion you produce ſeveral Reaſons, which are no new things to us, and which have been already Anſwered by ſuch as, on our ſide, have Written on this Subject. You ſay it *ſecures the Honour of Religion in the Solemnities of Worſhip, i. e.* from ſuch *Expreſſions* in Prayer as agree not with the *Genius* of your *Fancy*, or the *Fineneſs* of your *Stile*, or which, on ſome account or other, you might be ready to ridicule, or to quarrel at: And *then it affords the greateſt help in the*

part that you bear in it, i. e. It eaſes you of one, and that the more Spiritual, half of your Miniſterial Work; ſo that you are more beholden to your Prayer Book than to the Spirit of God in that Duty, which indeed is great pity, but yet ingeniouſly enough confeſſed. Again, by this means *You have no occaſion to be in Pain or Fear* (as you think we are) *about the next words that ſhall fall from your Miniſter*; as you might have Reaſon enough to be, were it not for his *Form* which he hath before his Eyes, or which he hath made as perfect as the Child hath his *Lord's Prayer:* Well may you be in Pain for one that never accuſtomed his Tongue to Holy Diſcourſe, more than what he hath prepared for his *Pulpit:* That never ſtudied his own Heart, nor hath been experimentally affected with the Caſes of Tender or Wounded Conſciences: No wonder if ſuch a one be at a loſs, that is a Stranger to theſe things. And,

Laſtly, By the Benefit of your Forms, *You have no Doubtful Expreſſions to exerciſe your Thoughts, or diſturb your Devotion with* (as you ſuppoſe there are in our Miniſters Prayers) *before you can ſay, Amen.* And this you take as a great Commodity, both to the Miniſter and to the People, for which it ought to be preferred before our way of Praying. And why are not the ſame Arguments as cogent for the uſe of *Homilies?* That ſo the whole Work may be

be cut out for him that Officiates; which would be a great eaſe to his Studies; ſome charge ſav'd in Books: A ſmall Sallary would ſerve to maintain him as a Curate; the more time to ſpend all the Week in the Satisfying of his Luſts, and the Debauching of his Neighbours: How happily would this conduce to the *comfortable Aſſurance of your performing an acceptable Service to God, and agreeable to his Will*, when the whole of the Miniſterial Work is thus wiſely prepared, that there can be no Errour in it if the Man can but read *Engliſh?*

What you quote us out of a Sermon of Dr. *Beveridge*, on 1 *Cor.* 14. 26. in the Praiſe of your own *Liturgy*, we ſhall not ſtay now to make Remarks upon, there having been enough already ſaid by others on this Point, and of which you cannot be ignorant. How your Liturgy was compil'd in that juncture of the *Reformation*, or rather *Accommodation*, the true Hiſtory of theſe Times would inform you; but *that this was that that was Defended, or Confirmed by the Martyrdom of many*, or of any, was the Doctor's great miſtake, and yours too. That it hath been Eſtabliſhed by *Acts of Parliament*, and fenc'd with the ſharp Thorns of *Penal Laws*, too often Arbitrarily and Deſpightfully executed, we have known to our ſorrow; but that ever it was yet eſtabliſhed by an *Act of Scripture* we could never yet learn.

2. You come next to Animadvert on our Miniſters Way of Preaching, which you repreſent as a *Sect of Phariſees, in which they have no meaning, or a bad one; and that we think our ſelves Edified by a Sound of Words, when we underſtand nothing by it.* Sir, this is Written with *Scorn* enough. Then you fall out (as well you may) with the *Antinomians.* But to ſet us forth in ſuch *Bear-skins* as theſe, is but a trick of the old Enmity and Policy.

But yet, if (for Argument ſake) *you ſhould ſuppoſe, that we have better Praying and Preaching; yet,* you ſay, *we do not pretend that there is any thing wanting with you that is neceſſary to Salvation.* Sir, We do not pretend that Salvation is not to be obtained in the *Church* of *England*; but whether there be any thing wanting with the moſt of thoſe that are ſet over our Souls in our Pariſh Churches, which is neceſſary to our *Salvation*, or no, of this we are ſure, there is ſomething wanting that is neceſſary to our *Edification*, or (if you had rather have it in your own words) *to our Converſion, and Advancing, and Perfecting in Knowledge, and Piety, and Faith, and Practice.* When we hear what, for Airineſs of the Notions, or the Affected Quaintneſs of the Language, we can't underſtand; or for the Obſcurity of the Method which ſeems to be generally affected, and is become the Mode amongſt your Modern Church-men, in oppoſition to the more

more Plain and Inſtructive Method, which was once called the Puritannical, and now (in deriſion) called DRUM Preaching, we can't comprehend; or, for the tumbling celerity of its utterance, we can't remember; when we muſt be Entertain'd with ſuch jejune inſipid ſtuff, as a School-boy would be aſhamed of in his Exerciſe; or have *Stones* given us inſtead of *Bread*, and Raileries inſtead of ſound Doctrine; or a good Sermon in the Pulpit, and a Vicious Life all the Week after, we can't think this to be very *Edifying*, or the Way to make any great *Advance* Heavenward. And 'tis hard to perſwade us thus to neglect our own Souls, to keep up the honour of your Ceremonies. 'Tis true, a Publick Good is to be preferr'd to a Private of the ſame kind. We ought to deny our ſelves, and to lay down our Lives for the Brethren; but we know not by whoſe Law, beſides yours, we are required to Damn our own Souls to pleaſe or to ſave others.

III. Your next *Enquiry* is, *Whether it be a good Rule, that we may, or ought to follow thoſe Teachers, whoſoever they are, by whom we can moſt be Edified; or whoſe Praying and Preaching we approve as moſt beneficial to our ſelves.* To which, as you have here *(more tuo)* ſtated it, we Anſwer, much as you would have us to do; Sir, We have no ſuch Licencious Rule as this to walk by: We are for *Diſcipline and Order* as much as you. But when we are driven out of your Communion by your unconſcionable

ſcionable Impoſitions; or have *Wolves* inſtead of *Shepherds* ſet over us, and enforc'd on us; or ſuch as are either unable or unapt to feed our Souls with the Bread of Life, we think it our *Duty*, and Bleſs God that we have now *Liberty*, and *Allowance* by the *Law of Men*, as well as of *God* to make the beſt Proviſion we can for thoſe poor Souls of ours which muſt Live or Die to Eternity, by the more Charitable aſſiſtances of thoſe whom the good Providence of God hath raiſed up for us, and ſent to us to this End. So that what you alledge out of, 1 *Cor.* 3. 3. is not to our Caſe, nor at all to your purpoſe. Yet here again you lift up your cry of *Unity and Order*; *That which is againſt the Unity of the Church is againſt the Edification of it.* That is, without an entire Conformity and tame Submiſſion to all your Impoſitions, your Church is broken, and weakned, and convuls'd, and undone. So that whoever they be that could ſpeak with the Tongues of Angels, or whatever their Qualifications and Commiſſions to Preach the Goſpel be, if they will not ſay as *you* ſay, and do as you do, in thoſe things wherein *you* Diſſent from almoſt all the Reformed Churches in the World, we muſt, for the preſervation of your Ceremonies, fly from them, and avoid 'em as moſt dangerous Fellows. And then, what is againſt the *Order* of your Church muſt needs be againſt *Edification*; as if there were no Order, but with *you*, or that yours were to give Laws and Orders to all others. For what you ſeem to ſpeak of the Church in general (to carry

carry with it a face of Orthodoxy (you design only for your own Church, from which you condemn us as Schismaticks for Dissenting, and in this Vein hath the Fallacy of your Arguings run throughout your whole Discourse.

IV. Your last *Enquiry* is of the same kind, and to the same purpose; *Whether our hopes of being better Edified, may justifie our Separation*; that is, say you, *if you have Stated the matter right* (which indeed is one of the most necessary Parenthesis in all your Book) *whether our false Hopes may justifie a Sinful Practice*. And this will as easily be resolv'd on your side as you can define or imagine, when once you shall have prov'd our *Hopes* to be False, and our *Practice* Sinful; but till then, you do but beg the Question.

And now, Sir, we are come with you to your Last *Section*, wherein you lament the deplorable consequences of *Schism*, in all which we have reason to think *you* much more properly concern'd as guilty than *our Selves*, who have been the Causes of all the Separation you complain of, and of the ill consequences of it. You tell us how it hath *hardened the Infidels in their Unbelief, and hinder'd their Conversion, brought a Reproach on the Reformation of the Church, and hindered the Progress of it, gives occasion to the spreading of many detestable Errors in matters of Religion, and greatly incouraged Immorality.* All which, if you had as much Charity for your selves, as you Sect. ult.

you pretend to have for us, you would apply, as you ought to do, to your ſelves, unleſs you have a mind to be famous among thoſe *Edifiers*, that have more care of other Men's Soul's than of their own. But being ſenſible how far we have run with you, though with as much haſte as we could beyond the ordinary Bounds of a *Letter*, we ſhall have done with your *Diſcourſe*, wherein we have found you better at Declaiming than at Arguing, though this we would impute rather to the incapacity of your Subject, than to the meaſure of your Parts or Learning, when we ſhall have ſhewn a little of the face of your *Spirit of Charity*, as it hath here appeared in your *own Glaſs*, and now in a truer Light.

Caſt back your Eye now, and ſee with what Induſtry you have gathered up all that hath come to hand from the *Fathers*, and from any others, that hath been written in Aggravation of the Sin of *Schiſm*, that you might caſt it as Stones with all your might at our Heads. Have you not repreſented us here, who are both your Chriſtian and your Proteſtant Brethren, as the very worſt of Sinners? That our Sin in Diſſenting from your Ceremonies, is worſe than *Murder* or *Idolatry*, and *equal to the Crucifying of the Son of God*; that we have hereby *cut our ſelves off from the Catholick, Church, and from Chriſt the Head of it?* Have made our ſelves ſome of the moſt Execrable and Hopeleſs Villains on the face of the Earth? That our ſcrupling your Way of Worſhip, is much worſe and more dangerous than down-

right

right *Popery*, and therefore ought to be more ſeverely dealt with, and have no benefit of Protection from the Laws of the Land we Live and were Born in? The *Papiſts* it ſeems are no *Schiſmaticks*, as we are, and therefore more tolerable, and deſerve more favour. Have you not ſet us forth as worſe than Thieves or Traitors, that ought to be Puniſhed with Death? That not to Kneel at the LORD's Supper is a greater Sin than Drunkenneſs, or Whoredom, or the fouleſt Immorality; not to wear a Surplice, more Vile than Idolatry or Witchcraft; to ſcruple the Croſs in Baptiſm, as bad as the Crucifying our Lord himſelf; that our Blood, though in Martyrdom, will not expiate our Guilt; though you ſhould tear us in Pieces, or burn us in the Fire, and make our Houſes Dunghils, and rid the Earth of us, yet this will not ſatisfie, unleſs you can Damn our Souls too; though all theſe be not your very Words, yet are they not the direct and natural conſequents of 'em? Beſides, have you not laid your Proteſtant Brethren in *France* and *Germany*, &c. who are the Suffering *Martyrs* and *Confeſſors* of the preſent Age, under the ſame Condemnation with us? O Sir, will you laugh at their Calamities, and juſtifie the Barbarities of their Enemies, and mock at their Tears and Groans, and yet call your ſelf *Proteſtant?* Will you clap your hands at them, and ſay, *Ah! ſo would we have it, down with 'em, down with 'em to the Ground*, that the Names of *Calvin* and *Geneva* may no more be had in remembrance? Is this your *Spirit of Charity and Meek-*

Meekneſs you told us of in the front of your Diſcourſe? *Frouti nulla fides.* If theſe be your Tender Mercies, what muſt your Severities be? We will now only mind you of what one of your *own Doctors* once ſaid to a *Papiſt*, and leave you to make the Application: "When we "conſider, ſays he, how many among you diſ- "pute for the poſſibility of the Salvation of Hea- "thens, and yet deny it to thoſe who own all the "Fundamentals of Chriſtianity; what can we "otherwiſe Imagine, but that it is the Intereſt "of your Church you more aim at, than the "Salvation of Men's Souls?

Still. Ration. Account. *p.* 613.

But before we diſmiſs you, we muſt crave your leave to do our ſelves more right than you have done us, in producing thoſe Six Arguments in our Names, and which you would have the World to believe is all that we have to ſay for our ſelves; which Arguments we have already reply'd to, and ſhewn how far we own or diſown them.

Sir, If you were as ignorant of the Controverſie that hath now almoſt this Forty Years been depending between us, and hath paſt through ſo many Hands on both ſides, as your Diſcourſe repreſents you to be, you were very unfit to meddle in it: But if you have ſuppreſt your own knowledge in it, you have not rightly conſulted the Honour of your Charity, Sincerity or Wiſdom. What we have further here to add in Defence of what you call our *Scbiſm*, you ſhall have in very few Words; that

that we may not fill up Paper with what hath been by others already Written. Something we muſt ſay for *our Selves*, and ſomething for *our Miniſters*.

I. *For our ſelves* we ſay thus.

What we cannot do without Sinning againſt Chriſt, and againſt our own Souls, we ought not to do:
But we cannot hold that Communion with the Church of England *which is required of us, without Sinning againſt Chriſt, and againſt our own Souls.*
Erg.

The *Minor* only is to be prov'd. And,

Firſt, *That we cannot hold that Communion with the Church of* England *which is required of us, without Sinning againſt Chriſt.* That is, that Stated Communion, to the diſowning or forſaking of the Non-conforming Miniſters and their Aſſemblies, without Sinning againſt Chriſt; which we prove thus.

To forſake the Miniſters of Chriſt without cauſe, is to Sin againſt Chriſt.

But to forſake the Non-conforming Miniſters whom we hear, is to forſake the Miniſters of Chriſt without Cauſe.
Erg.

The

The *Minor* only is what you can except againſt; but if it hath been already ſubſtantially prov'd that *our Miniſters*, whom you condemn as *no Miniſters*, for want of *Epiſcopal Ordinations*, or for not Conforming to the Laws and Rites of your Communion, be in truth the Miniſters of Chriſt, as we are abundantly ſatisfi'd it hath been, then is our *Minor* good: And to forſake them, eſpecially in their Sufferings, and when *you* have, without cauſe, caſt them out of your Communion, and out of their Places in their Maſter's Vineyard, we are in our Conſciences convinc'd is to forſake Chriſt; for ſo he himſelf hath told us, *Matth.* 10. 40. *He that receiveth you, receiveth me; and he that receiveth me, receiveth him that ſent me.* And *Luke* 10. 16. *He that heareth you, heareth me; and he that deſpiſeth you, deſpiſeth me; and he that diſpiſeth me, deſpiſeth him that ſent me.* Nor can we but tremble to think of that dreadful Doom foretold us by that very Mouth that ſhall at laſt pronounce it, *Matth.* 25. 41, &c. *Depart from me ye Curſed into Everlaſting Fire, prepared for the Devil and his Angels; for I was an Hungred, and ye gave me not Meat; I was Thirſty, and ye gave me no Drink; I was a Stranger, and ye took me not in; Naked, and ye Clothed me not, Sick, and in Priſon, and ye viſited me not? For inaſmuch as ye did it not to one of the leaſt of theſe, ye did it not to me.* Sir, if you can make light of theſe things, we

we can't. 'Tis in vain for you to tell us, They are none of *Chriſt's Miniſters*, when we are aſſur'd they are. In vain to go about to perſwade us that *you* are the Men, when we ſee how you diſown and hate *your Brethren*. In vain for you, at this time of the Day, to call Light Darkneſs, or Darkneſs Light, when our own Eyes are open to ſee the difference. In vain to tell us, They are no Miniſters of the *Church of England*, becauſe you have ſo unjuſtly caſt them out, and keep them out. In vain to tell us, They are Intruders, when we ſee who they are that have extruded them, and why. In vain to inſiſt with us on your *Pariſh-Bounds*, when we know by whom, and for what Reaſons theſe *Bounds* were firſt ſet; when we ſee and hear with what Stuff moſt of our Pariſh Pulpits are fill'd; when we ſee in what a Condition our Pariſhes generally lye, as to Ignorance and Immorality, and what crying Need there is of more and better Miniſterial Help; and when we know that the Miniſters of Chriſt are Miniſters, where-ever they be, and are bound to preach the Goſpel to any that will hear them. Yea, when we remember that they had once the Pulpits and Pariſhes which you now poſſeſs, till you came upon them with the Advantage of a Secular Power, and turn'd them Headlong by Hundreds, *Ex Officio & Beneficio*, and exchang'd their Pulpits for Priſons, and their Maintenance for Mulcts, and Fines, and Confiſcations. And in vain do you tell us of your *Charity* and *meek Spirit*, when we taſte and ſee what the

bitter Fruits of it are. Sir, We dare not thus to ſin againſt Chriſt to pleaſe you, nor hazard his Favour to keep up the Credit of thoſe pitiful little things you are ſo fond of.

2. We cannot do what you require of us, without ſinning againſt our own Souls; and that both in reſpect of the *Danger* we are in, by turning our Backs on the Miniſters of Chriſt, and neglecting to hear them whom he hath ſent us, which is not only a Contempt of his Bounty, but an Affront to his Authority, eſpecially when we read *Matth.* 10. 14, 15. *Whoſoever ſhall not receive you, nor hear your Words, when ye depart out of that Houſe, or City, ſhake off the Duſt of your Feet. Verily I ſay unto you, it ſhall be more tolerable for the Land of* Sodom *and* Gomorrha *in the Day of Judgment, than for that City.* By what Names ſoever you may now call them, and by whatſoever Gloſſes of yours, you may tempt us to believe that this Scripture doth not concern us in this Caſe, we know that you ſhall not be our Judges, nor our Compurgators in that Day; nor can we think our ſelves ſafe, ſhould we refuſe to receive and hear thoſe Miniſters of Chriſt whom he hath ſent, but you have caſt out. But, beſides we dare not ſo deſpiſe our *own Souls*, nor the *Souls* of our *Families*, which are committed to our Charge, as to neglect that which we find to be the beſt, and moſt ſucceſsful Means to promote their Growth in Grace and Good Works here, in order to their Eternal Happineſs

neſs hereafter; nor ought we to be wheedl'd or ridicul'd by you from this our Way. And tho' we muſt ſuffer all the Reproaches and hard Cenſures, that you can load us with for ſo doing, we will take it patiently and thankfully at *God's Hands*, tho' unkindly at *yours*. Had we no more but this to ſay for our ſelves, it were enough to juſtifie our Non-Communion with you, and our owning and adhering to the Miniſters of Chriſt, whom we hear; but you cannot but know that there are many other things, with clear Evidence of Reaſon and Truth, urg'd by ſeveral others, who have travell'd in this Province, and to whom (that we may not here be too tedious to you) we do referr you; aſſuring you that we are not carry'd by a *Senſe of Liberty*, but by a *Senſe of Duty*, as many of us as have any Religious Principles to act by, either in our, or in your Communions; not becauſe allowed by Men, but becauſe commanded of God, to do what you ſo uncharitably condemn us for.

II. For *our Miniſters*, we ſay,

1. That it was never deſir'd nor deſign'd by thoſe that influenc'd the Revolution of Church Affairs, on the Reſtauration of King *Charles* the Second, that any of thoſe of the *Presbyterian Way*, ſhould be comprehended in that *Act* that was then made for *Uniformity*. And tho' they pretended to treat with them about it, the *Deſign* was but to know what

they would ſtick at, that ſo they might be ſure to ſhut them out, as appears not only by the *Meaſures* they took, but by what is credibly reported of Archbiſhop *Sheldon*, that he ſhould ſay, *Now we know their Minds, we'll make them all Knaves if they conform.* And of another Reverend Dean, that reply'd to a ſober Gentleman, complaining that they had made the Door of Admiſſion too ſtrait. *If we had thought ſo many of 'em would have conform'd, we would have made it ſtraiter.* So then, they muſt Sacrilegiouſly have renounc'd their Miniſtry, to have put their Necks under the Yoke of your Tyranny; for into the Miniſtry you were reſolv'd not to admit them, if by any Means you could keep them out, as you did the far greater part of them, to the number of about *Two Thouſand.*

Defence of Mr. *M. H.* of Schiſm, *Append.* *p.* 143.

2. It is moſt certain that they neither could then, nor can now obtain their Miniſterial Communion with you, without ſinning directly againſt their own Conſciences. For,

1. How can they, without the moſt horrid *Perjury*, declare upon Oath their full Aſſent and Conſent to ſuch things as they are perſwaded in their Judgments to be unſound in Doctrine, and ſuperſtitious in Worſhip; can this be done without lying to the Holy Ghoſt? And yet having thus ſhut them out of your Communion, and hitherto kept the Door ſo ſtrongly barr'd againſt them, will your *Charity* accuſe them for their *Separation from you?* How

How unſincere is this? You ſhould have ſpoken out the very Truth; that when you firſt threw them out of your Communion, you repent you had not thrown them out of the World, could you have found any Pretence for it? That when you ſtopt their Mouths, you had not ſtopt their Breath too. Pray Sir, upbraid them no more with their *Nonconformity*, nor charge them with *Schiſm* on that Account, till you can aſſure them which way they can conform to you in their Miniſterial Capacity, without *Perjury*; or in a Lay-capacity, without *Sacriledge*.

2. How can they ſubmit to your *Reordination*, without condemning and renouncing their firſt *Ordination* as null; and conſequently not only condemn *Themſelves*, and all their former *Miniſterial Acts*, but all thoſe *Proteſtant Churches* in the World, that have no other than *Presbyterial Ordinations*; which, while they are, as they have Reaſon to be, otherwiſe minded, they can't poſſibly do, without ſinning point blank againſt their own Conſciences, againſt the Truth, and againſt the greater part of the Church of Chriſt in the World. So that they muſt either do this, which is tremendous to think, or muſt abandon their *Office*, which they can't do without a *Sacrilegious Deſertion*, and ſinning againſt Chriſt, who hath put them in Commiſſion, and to whom they have ſworn Fidelity; and againſt ſo many Thouſand Souls too that are periſhing for want of more and better Miniſterial Help, almoſt every where throughout the

the Kingdom. This μέγιστον ἐν ἐλαχίστῳ, this little we think is enough to justifie their Practice, in preaching the Gospel of Christ to us, and to as many as will hear them: And for you to brand *Them* or *Us* as *Schismaticks* for so doing, is openly to fight against God.

Sir, We wonder what you could propose to your self as the Merit of such an Undertaking; what is the θεῖον you please your self with; the rare Discovery you have made after the most inquisitive Researches, that have been made for these 38 Years, by the most learned and sharpest Wits on both sides? What have you to add to what hath been by the greatest Names in your Church already urg'd, and which hath been over and over answer'd? If your Design had not been to impose a Wheedle on such as never read much, nor are capable of making a Judgment in controversial Cases; and under a Pretence of Charity and Zeal for their Souls, to affright them with the black Name of *Schism*, and so to lick them into your Communion, you would have taken other Measures. If you would have pleaded the Case like a Man of Sense and Integrity, you would have taken up the Arguments on our side in their Strength, as they have been offered, on every part of the Controversie, by Mr. *Baxter*, Mr. *Clarkson*, Mr. *Owen*, the *Defender of Mr.* M.H. Mr. *Corbet*, Mr. *Rule*, and many others, more than it is needful for us here to mention, and too tedious to make Collections from, while the Authors themselves may so easily be consulted.

ſulted. To conclude, In what you have herein done, it appears to *Us*, that you have ſhewn your *Charity* and your *Diſcretion* much alike; who are,

Reverend Sir,

Your Brethren in the Catholick Unity of the Chriſtian Faith; tho' thoſe Diſſenters, who (ſome of us) conform'd before the Toleration, and have ſince withdrawn our ſelves from the Communion of the Church of ENGLAND.

April 12th.
1700.

F I N I S.